

Whatmore to return after 2 weeks

AL-AMIN from London

The members of the Bangladesh cricket team wore black badges during their final league game of the NatWest Series against Australia in Canterbury on Thursday as a mark of respect to Dav Whatmore's father Davenell Clifford, who died in Melbourne at the age of 93.

It was perhaps the best way for Habibul Bashar's men to express their sympathy to their beloved coach who left for Melbourne from London on June 25 to be at his ailing father's bedside.

The cricketers were trying to communicate with Whatmore since he left before the game against England at Manchester, but they were unable to get through.

They only learnt from Bangladesh Cricket Board's (BCB) cricket committee chairman Mahub Anam on June 29 that "Whatmore's father had expired and his funeral was held on Friday".

Team manager MA Latif also said that there had been no communication between the team and Whatmore for the last five days.

"I don't have his number in Australia, so I couldn't communicate with him," said Latif while the team was checking out from Falstaff Inn in Canterbury on July 1.

Meanwhile, BCB officials back in Dhaka said they had talked with a dejected Whatmore yesterday over telephone when the coach informed

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Bashar's men miss Super Saturday

Team arrives today



AL-AMIN from London

When England paceman Darren Gough bowled the first delivery of the NatWest Series final in front of 30,000 capacity crowd at Lord's Saturday, Bangladesh cricket team were on their way to Heathrow to catch a 2pm Bangladesh Biman flight back home.

"Who won the toss and who is batting?" asked Mohammad Ashraful from the team bus that has been the only mode of transport for the Tigers over the last eight weeks.

"I think England stand a better chance to win the final," remarked the exciting right-hander after being informed that the home side won the toss and elected to field in overcast condition.

Although the weather has not at all been inspiring in London for the last few days, the bustling British capital attired a festive look to celebrate a grand Saturday.

While Lord's offered a grand final between England with their fierce rivals Australia, away at Wimbledon the Championships entered into its final day. But the biggest gathering was taking place at Hyde Park for

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PHOTO: INTERNET

YOU'RE GONE: Australia captain Ricky Ponting (R) looks back in disbelief that England wicketkeeper Geraint Jones take the catch off fast bowler Steve Harmison (L) to dismiss him during the NatWest Series final at Lord's on Saturday.

Arambagh keep away from relegation zone

SPORTS REPORTER

Arambagh Kriha Sangha recorded a comfortable 3-1 win over Youngmen's Club Fakirerpool yesterday at the Bangabandhu National Stadium to stay four points clear of the Premier Bank Premier Football League relegation zone.

Patrick, Ritu and Ghansah all scored in the first-half as Arambagh pushed their collection to eight points, finishing the seventh round at seventh place with their second victory.

Youngmen's, who are eighth on the ten-team table with four points, also scored before the break with Chanchal striking the consolation goal.

Ugandan striker Patrick opened the account after eight minutes when he pounced on a rebound after Ritu's shot came off rival keeper Shiplu. Ritu then doubled the lead in the 17th minute, drilling a low right footer into the far corner after being set up by a long cross by Morshed from the left.

Hard working midfielder Chanchal stabbed home a low cross by Baten in the 33rd minute to bring Youngmen's back in the match but three minutes later, Ghanaian centre-back Ghansah's angular left-footer from the left side of the penalty area sealed Arambagh's victory.

With incessant rain, it was hard for the booters even to keep balance on the ground but still, Arambagh created two chances. However, Patrick's shot on one-on-one was saved by Shiplu before Morshed's placing shot went just wide of the far post.

After today's rest day, the Premier League will resume tomorrow with a clash of local heavyweights, a crucial eighth round match between second and third-placed Brothers and Abahani.

POINTS TABLE

| Teams | M | W | D | L | GF | GA | Pts |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Mohammedan | 7 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 11 | 3 | 17 |
| Brothers | 7 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 4 | 16 |
| Abahani | 7 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 15 | 9 | 14 |
| Muktijoddha | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 11 | 8 | 13 |
| Farashganj | 7 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 13 |
| Russel | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 5 | 8 |
| Arambagh | 7 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 9 | 11 | 8 |
| Youngmen's | 7 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 24 | 4 |
| Wanderers | 7 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 15 | 3 |
| Dipali | 7 | 0 | 1 | 6 | 10 | 20 | 1 |

Super Series sides named

AGENCIES, London

The ultimate challenge to Australia's cricketing supremacy came a step closer on Saturday with the announcement of the International Cricket Council (ICC) World XI squads of 20 players for the Super Series in Australia this October.

Heading a star cast of batsmen are Sachin Tendulkar, Michael Vaughan, Rahul Dravid and Virender Sehwag who all average above 50 in Tests against Australia.

Steve Harmison, Shoaib Akhtar, Muttiah Muralitharan and Makhaya Ntini are included among a potent squad of bowlers, while Andrew Flintoff and Shaun Pollock lead a clutch of world class all-rounders.

After missing out on selection in the original squads of 30, West Indies captain Shivnarine Chanderpaul has been included in the ICC World XI Test squad after averaging more than 77 over his last 13 Tests.

Another squad newcomer is Harmison, the England fast bowler. He has been picked for the one-day squad after some impressive form in the triangular NatWest Series.

The strength and depth of the squads is highlighted by the quality of players that Sunil Gavaskar's

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Winter sets in New Bangladesh U-19 coach speaks



SPORTS REPORTER

Allister de Winter was an exception on June 18. When all the Australians were shell-shocked with their world champion side going down at the hands of the roaring Tigers in a limited-overs international in England, the newly appointed High Performance manager of Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had reasons to feel comfortable with the glorious victory.

Bangladesh's historic 5-wicket win at the Sophia Gardens in Cardiff gave an indication to the 37-year-old coach that he was going to join a very exciting job in a country where a number of young cricketers are coming to rule the game in the near future.

"As an Australian it was a very interesting situation as well as a funny experience for me to see Bangladesh coming through with the world's top team," said de Winter, who replaced his compatriot Richard McInnes in the post.

"I was attending a farewell party arranged by some of my friends when Bangladesh won their game against Australia. They were shocked but for me it was exciting as I was just on way to leaving for Bangladesh," he added yesterday at the Board's Gulshan office.

The ever-smiling Australian,

whose contract with the BCB runs till the 2008 Under-19 World Cup, was very excited and optimistic about his new assignment and said there is a opportunity to see the new Test-playing nation at the top of the ICC world rankings within five to six years.

"I think it's just a beginning but everybody certainly realised that



ALLISTER DE WINTER

Bangladesh has a very good national team. This was a very positive series and I believe it will be a great inspiration for rest of the players. The victory just demonstrated that we have the talent and ability to challenge the top teams," he said.

Having worked for ten days since arriving here on June 23, de Winter

has seen a lot of impressive things to fulfil his dream.

"I have already visited the BKSP several times to have sessions with the Bangladesh A team and I was very pleased with the facilities in the sports institute. The players are very talented and I am looking forward to working with the guys."

De Winter pointed out two areas to work on the young Bangladeshi cricketers to develop their skills and make them competitive at the highest level of the game.

"I don't think there is any major problem with the technique but the problem lies in their mental and physical strength. I think lack of patience is one of the reasons behind their weakness. It was exposed mostly in the five-day games during the tour of England," detected de Winter.

"I must seriously continue Richard's work but at the same time, I will do it in my own way and style. To me, technology is just a component in the whole job. It is important how the players respond to the planning. I want to emphasise on communication," he explained.

When asked whether it is wise to push under-19 players straight into the national team or not, he said: "There is an argument around the world for or against it. I am not totally against it. You see West Indies

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Postcard from England



AL-AMIN from London

So, Bangladesh's most demanding tour of England is over. The cricketers are homebound after eight weeks of tough challenges they have never come across before since joining the Test family five years ago.

During the gruelling series that included two Tests and six one-day internationals -- three each against hosts England and Australia -- there was hue and cry from different quarters on a number of occasions whether Bangladesh was good enough to compete at the highest level.

It grew louder after Habibul Bashar's men lost both the Tests at Lord's and then at Chester-le-Street inside three days.

But the 5-wicket triumph against world champions Australia at Cardiff

Sophia Gardens on June 18 not only stopped the critics on their path but also gave the Tigers much-needed self-belief. It also proved that they truly belonged to the elite family and a bright future lies ahead of them.

There was sadness at the start of an eventful eight weeks but when Bangladesh finished their last game against Australia at St Lawrence ground in Canterbury on June 30, they were all smiling.

The mere statistics, which read 2-0 whitewash in the Tests and a 1-5 score in ODIs, might suggest a predictable analogy but in reality there was lot of positives despite those defeats.

The biggest achievement for Bangladesh in England was Mohammad Ashraful's dazzling performance in the one-dayers.

"His 100 against Australia at Sophia Gardens was the turning point. It proved that we showed undue respect to the opponent bowlers in the two Tests. Had we not thought of those big names like

Steve Harmison, Matthew Hoggard or Andrew Flintoff we would have been better off," observed skipper Habibul Bashar.

He admitted that the hype before the first Test and the reputation of Lord's coupled with the constant bickering from the English media put an enormous strain on his young side.

"But we have now learned to sustain the pressure."

Bashar's men certainly showed great character when they recovered from a hopeless 75-5 to post 250 against Australia in their last match.

There was a big question mark on the ability of our batsmen after the two Test series against Michael Vaughan's side. But it improved with every passing game except for that mindless collapse against England, where eight wickets fell for 26 runs.

Bangladesh put on big partnerships in almost every game and it was no surprise when Australian captain Ricky Ponting said: "I think

they have played pretty well against us. Actually they have played better in a couple of games against us than England did. They have scored 250 in either games but we dominated in the other game. I think their batting in particular has improved. They have some young batsmen they looked pretty good at this level."

Ponting did not mention any names. But it was obvious he was referring to Ashraful, Aftab Ahmed and latest sensation Shahriar Nafees, who hit a superb 75 against Australia on June 30.

"If they can have some depth in the bowling I think they are going to be a very competitive side," remarked Ponting.

Bashar not only admitted that but almost made a public announcement.

"I want a bowler as good as Mashrafe-bin-Mortuza. I don't what to say Tapash Baisya, Nazmul Hossain or Shahadat Hossain are

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Roddick sets up repeat final with Federer

AFP, London

Andy Roddick of the United States set up a repeat of last year's Wimbledon final against Roger Federer when he defeated Thomas Johansson of Sweden after a tough battle in Saturday's rain-delayed second semi-final.

The second seed won 6-7 (6/8), 6-2, 7-6 (12/10), 7-6 (7/5), to join the top seed and title-holder in Sunday's final. The match had been held over from Friday because of rain with Roddick 6-5 up in the first set.

Federer defeated third seed Lleyton Hewitt of Australia 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) on Friday before the rain came down.

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England restrict Aussies



AFP, London

Andrew Flintoff and Stephen Harmison took three wickets apiece as England bowled out Australia for 196 in the triangular NatWest Series final at Lord's here Saturday.

Flintoff, three for 23 from eight overs, and Harmison, three for 27 from 10, ensured the world champions struggled although the worth of their total would only become truly apparent when England batted on a lively pitch.

Michael Hussey top-scored with 62 not out and was the only batsman to get more than 29 after England captain Michael Vaughan won the toss.

Inserted in overcast seam bowler friendly conditions, left-handed openers Adam Gilchrist and Matthew Hayden raced to a fifty partnership in 39 balls.

But Hayden, on 17, mistimed a drive off Darren Gough, the ball looping gently to Ashley Giles at mid-off.

Flintoff then got England right back in the game when Gilchrist skied a pull and was caught at mid-wicket by Kevin Pietersen to leave Australia 54 for two.

Gilchrist's 27 came off 37 balls with five fours, but Australia, in captain Ricky Ponting and Damien Martyn, now had two new batsmen at the crease.

Ponting pulled Gough for six but did not look comfortable and off Harmison's first ball was acrobatically caught down the leg-side by

Geraint Jones for seven, the first of five catches for the keeper, after a glance off the full face of the bat.

Both Damien Martyn and Andrew Symonds struggled in the face of some accurate bowling and eventually Harmison had Martyn caught behind for 11.

Australia were utterly bogged down, going 28 balls without a run and also losing Michael Clarke lbw to Simon Jones for two during that sequence.

Meanwhile Harmison's opening spell yielded such impressive figures (7-2-12-2) it was a slight surprise Vaughan did not bowl him straight through with only the tail to come.

Symonds and Hussey repaired some of the early damage with a

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PHOTO: AFP

American Andy Roddick celebrates after defeating Thomas Johansson of Sweden in the semifinal of the Wimbledon Championships in London on Saturday.