

No more delaying CCL

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

The organisers are adamant to start the domestic cricket on schedule despite Saturday's heavy rain that damaged the outfield of six venues prepared for holding matches of the Corporate Cricket League (CCL).

"There is no scope to defer the league again since the board has already published its yearly calendar. Another delay will upset the whole domestic fixture," member secretary of CCL Ali Hossain told reporters yesterday.

The season's curtain-raiser involving 12 corporate houses has already been deferred twice due to unlikely rain at this time of the year.

But Hossain said that even it rains or shines the one-day competition will kick-off on Monday.

"We are praying for the rain to stay away. It will be unfortunate if there is no action on Monday. We will be

forced to award one point each if the matches were abandoned due to inclement weather," he said.

Six teams will be in action on the opening day at two venues in the city and the other at the BKSP in Savar.

Araf Apparels, who won the inaugural edition in 2003, will meet Epyllion Group at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Gazi Tank face Banglacet at the BKSP and Bangladesh Biman will take on Metro Real Estate at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Hossain said that the pitches of the three venues have been well covered but the only problem they faced was how to dry the soaked outfield.

"There is only a problem with the outfield and another spell of rain tomorrow could spoil the hard work of the groundsmen."

The players are also upset with the inclement weather.

"There is a lot of enthusiasm among the players and they have enjoyed training under brilliant

sunshine for the last few days. But Saturday's rain has certainly upset their rhythm. But I believe once the competition gets underway everything will be fine," said former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud, who will lead a strong Gazi Tank that includes national cap Manzarul Islam, Nazimuddin, Monjurul Islam, Gazi Alamgir and Gazi Salahuddin.

Bangladesh captain Habibul Bashar was also positive about the competition.

"The national team players are very serious to perform well in the competition," said Bashar, who leaves Dhaka today to attend the ICC's Test captains' meeting in Sydney.

Bashar, who is leading Acme Laboratories, will however miss the first game against the Akram Khan-led star-studded Beximco at the Bogra Stadium on October 11. Former national captain Naimur has also ruled himself out from the Amce line-up due to injury.

Opener Javed Omar, left-arm spinner Mohammad Rafique, dis-

carded national opener Hannan Sarker, paceman Hasibul Hossain are the popular names in the Acme line-up. Beximco on the other hand features young sensation Moha-mmud Ashraful, Rajin Saleh, Shahriar Hossain, Al-Shahriar, Talha Jubair, Mehrab Hossain Jr, Abdur Razzak, Faisal Hossain and Neeyamur Rashid.

Last year's runners-up Biman, Epyllion and Araf are the other big names in the 12-team competition. Biman's impressive line-up features Sanwar Hossain, Mushfiqur Rahman, Hasanuzzaman, Mehrab Hossain, national paceman Syed Russel and Mohammad Sharif.

Araf will bank much on out-of-favour Alok Kapali, Ehsanul Haque, Hasanuzzaman Rozel, Mohammad Salim and Jamal Uddin Babu.

In-form Tushar Imran will lead a youthful Epyllion side that includes left-handed opener Shahriar Nafees, paceman Shahadat Hossain Rajib, Tareq Aziz Khan and wicketkeeper-batsman Dhiman Gosh.

WC payout for Kenyan players

AFP, Nairobi

Kenya's cricket players were given a morale boost ahead of their Intercontinental Cup semifinals in Namibia by receiving bonuses from the 2003 World Cup.

The government announced the release of three million shillings (about 42,000 dollars) to offset their unpaid allowances and bonuses from the 2003 World Cup, where they made the semifinals, as well as the 2004 Champions Trophy in England.

The non-payment of their dues has been a thorny issue leading to a player revolt against the former Kenya Cricket Association (KCA) office last October.

Kenyan sports officials said the gesture to reward the players was in appreciation at the quick return to the normalcy after a long turbulent period which forced the government to appoint an interim committee last year.

Kenya, who play Bermuda in the ICC Intercontinental Cup on October 23-25, leave the country early next month with a stop-over in Zimbabwe to play a two three-day match against Zimbabwe A.

World's last chance



BBC ONLINE

The misfiring World XI will have to force a win in the final one-day international XI to prevent a 3-0 series whitewash by Australia here on Sunday.

And their task is made no easier with the return of premier seam bowler Glenn McGrath to the hosts' ranks.

Meanwhile, World XI batsman Kevin Pieteresen (hamstring) and Aussie opener Simon Katich (groin) are doubtful.

With so many of the global superstars failing with the bat, Andrew Flintoff is likely to bat higher than seven.

He has produced scores of 38 and 42 while the middle-order engine-room of Rahul Dravid and Jacques Kallis has failed spectacularly.

McGrath missed the middle match, when Australia smashed 328-4 before bowling out Shaun Pollock's team for

273.

But he bowled superbly in the first match, with figures of 2-13 in seven overs, and Stuart Clark is likely to return to the sidelines after making his debut on Friday.

Young spinning all-rounder Cameron White, a super-sub in both games, may start the final match and Australia also have the option of bringing in another all-rounder James Hopes, who is yet to appear in the series.

For the World XI, Makhaya Ntini is fresh and could relieve Shoaib Akhtar, who has not enjoyed the conditions at Melbourne's Telstra Dome.

If Katich does not play, the World XI may have a chance to claim some early wickets with the new ball, something they have so far failed to do.

Michael Hussey, currently batting at seven, is a natural opener and the most likely person to partner Adam Gilchrist.

It is Gilchrist who will be the most prized wicket for the World XI, with scores of 103 and 45 so far.

Australian all-rounder Andrew

Symonds said the players were yet to hit overdrive.

He said: "Our fielding's probably just a little bit behind where it has been in the past."

"But we're a very proud team and we had a few things we had to prove to ourselves more than anyone and I think we've gone about that pretty well."

"We're not into answering critics. Our team is about being the best team we can be and trying to improve and become a better side leading into the World Cup."

He retains respect for the World XI.

"There'll probably be a pride thing and we'd also like to win three-nil. The last game might bring the best clash," said Symonds.

"It wouldn't surprise me if the last game went down to the last over or something like that."

TEAMS
AUSTRALIA (from): RT Ponting (captain), AC Gilchrist, SM Katich, DR Martyn, A Symonds, MJ Clarke.

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Wright sees nothing wrong



AFP, Melbourne

World XI coach John Wright defended the concept of the best cricket team versus the rest of the world in the face of two heavy one-day defeats by his team against Australia.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) invested heavily in the Super Series of three one-dayers and a Test match, pitting the best players in the world against the world's top one-day and Test team Australia.

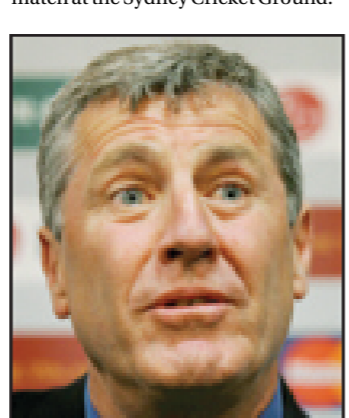
But the series has a huge credibility problem after the Australians whipped the World XI by 93 and 55 runs.

The two anti-climactic contests have prompted critics to forecast an end to future Super Series on the international cricket calendars.

New Zealand coach Wright, the former coach of India, said the Super Series

offered a unique contest for international cricketers and he hoped the ICC would not dump it after Australia's overpowering performances.

The one-day series goes to a dead rubber on Sunday with only pride on the line for the beaten world all-stars ahead of next week's six-day Test match at the Sydney Cricket Ground.



JOHN WRIGHT

Asked if the concept was in danger of being canned, Wright told reporters Saturday:

"I would personally hope not. It gives the players a wonderful opportunity to play together, I have seen that this week."

"The media will judge it on the results, but I have seen how much enjoyment the players have had, they enjoy meeting each other, discussing things and having a meal together."

"The losses are hard to take because we've got big pride, but I have seen a lot of enjoyment and interaction between the players, and from that point of view it's been excellent."

"Some of the cricket we saw yesterday was outstanding, so it does give a platform for something a bit unique and a bit different, as long as it is not overdone, say hold it every four years."

Critics have claimed a lack of passion in the world team against

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Wounds have healed: Symonds



SPORTING LIFE

Andrew Symonds believes Australia have tended to their wounded pride with victory in the Super Series one-dayers.

While there were doubts over the Australians' eminence following Ashes defeat, it was the chance to prove to themselves rather than the doubters which inspired Ricky Ponting's men in two thumping wins over the World XI.

They now have the opportunity to complete a whitewash following victories by 93 and 55 runs respectively under the Telstra Dome roof.

Limited-overs specialist Symonds was one of those not having to deal with the psychological effect of losing

to England last month but has witnessed his team-mates obliterate uncertainty in stunning fashion.

"Their pride was wounded," Symonds said. "They were obviously very disappointed but they looked to me that they allowed what happened to sink in, thought about it and decided to do something about it."

"To get their chests out again and not be ashamed at what has past, learn from it and use it as our next challenge."

"Any grey areas in our team, I believe, were to do with ourselves."

"At the start of this week when we gathered there was a new excitement, a sense of a new challenge to us all and that is what has driven us. We are a very proud side and we do not like to be beaten."

"We didn't go out there over the last two games and try to prove anything to anyone, we just wanted to play some

good cricket, go back to basics and do what we have done over the last decade. We pretty much did that."

"There are areas we can improve on but there are also a great many positives we can take out of the games."

Careful culling has taken place in the aftermath of the English tour but those who have survived have responded in emphatic manner, most obviously Adam Gilchrist, who thundered to the fastest hundred by an Australian in one-day history in the second match, a 73-ball effort of supreme power.

Damien Martyn, dropped from the Test equation, struck a selfless half-century while Simon Katich has taken the opening berth afforded by Matthew Hayden's omission.

Others not infected by Ashes

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PHOTO: AFP

Tatiana Golovin of France plays a forehand against Sania Mirza of India in the semifinals of the Japan Open in Tokyo on Saturday.

Tatiana ends Sania's dream run

AFP, Tokyo

French teen sensation Tatiana Golovin earned a spot in the final of the Japan Open on Saturday, defeating India's rising star Sania Mirza to set up a rematch in Tokyo with 16-year-old Czech Nicole Pietrangola.

The 17-year-old Moscow-born Golovin, the third seed here, scored a 6-2, 6-4 victory over the 18-year-old Mirza in one of the all-teenage semifinals, while Vaidisova defeated 18-year-old Maria Kirilenko of Russia, 6-4, 6-2.

The Frenchwoman missed two match points at 5-0 in the second set and then lost her serve for the first time in the following game to bring the score to 5-2, when rain halted play for 25 minutes.

With the roof closed, Mirza suddenly stepped up her game, taking the next two games to come back to 4-5, but Golovin took a comfortable 40-15 lead in the 10th game before Mirza hit her backhand wide on the third match point.

In the other semifinal, Kirilenko, fresh from her first career title at the China Open two weeks ago, twice came back from a service break down in the first set, but the fourth seed fell 6-4 when she sent a forehand into the net.

Vaidisova jumped ahead 3-0 in the second set and never looked back, finishing off the 78-minute match on another forehand error from Kirilenko.

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Tait could be back soon

REUTERS, Melbourne

Australia pace bowler Shaun Tait has undergone surgery on his right shoulder and could be back playing sooner than expected, Cricket Australia said on Friday.

Tait was withdrawn from the Australian side for matches against the World XI after experiencing pain in his bowling shoulder playing club cricket last week.

Scans revealed torn cartilage in his shoulder and it was initially thought he could be out of action for at least four months, though Australian team doctor Trefor James said recovery time could be reduced after the surgery on Thursday.

"The injury was not as extensive as had been anticipated and he will be able to resume playing sooner than had been initially expected," James said in a statement.

Tait could be named for the home triangular series including Sri Lanka and South Africa in January, or the one-day series in South Africa in February.

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Mahmud clarifies quit story

SPORTS REPORTER

A day after it was reported that former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud had announced his retirement, it caused widespread confusion in cricketing circles.

But player himself dismissed it as speculation.

"Hours after the BBC broke the news, I received several phone calls from the media to know whether the story was actually true or not. But I wish to state that I never officially wrote to the Bangladesh Cricket Board of my intention to quit international game," said Mahmud.

"However, I admit I told the BBC that I had made my mind up to quit the game but not right at the moment. I will likely announce my retirement in next home game," he added.

Reefat's streak continues

SPORTS REPORTER

International Master Reefat Bin Sattar continued his winning run to share the lead in the Fifth Asian Individual Chess Championship at the end of the second round in Hyderabad, India on Friday.

Reefat, who already secured the Grand Master norm but needs to fulfil the desired rating for the coveted title, beat Iranian Grand Master Ghaem Maghami Ehsan at the Kotla Vijaya Bhaskar Reddy Indoor Stadium to grab maximum points.

Grand Master Ziaur Rahman, who drew his first board, won his second round board against Indian International Master Deepseth Gupta while IM Abdullah Al Rakib drew with Indian Grand Master Sandipan Chanda and Enamul Hossain Rajib shared points with Indian Grand Master Abhijit Kunte.

A man mountain from Multan



MELBOURNE

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq is a big bear of a man who speaks quietly and dislikes attention. Ask him a question and you'd better be sitting in his lap if you want to hear the answer.

Inzamam says he craves a low profile, even in his own home, but such an idyllic existence does not exist when you're the skipper of Pakistan. Lose, and your home will be pelted with stones. Your car won't be there in the morning.

Everything is low key with Inzamam except his batting, for here stands a player who, at his bludgeoning best, is a one-man wrecking machine.

Boundaries are Inzamam's prefer-

ence, not least because it means he doesn't have to run.

"I'm not a very talkative man," said Inzamam -- who will play in the Super Test against Australia at the SCG this



INZAMAMUL HAQ

week -- during his previous visit to Australia.

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Did U Know?

German tennis legend Steffi Graf won a minimum of seven tournaments a year for eleven straight years (1986-96).



Brett Lee

(Australia fast bowler)

"He is a bit of a superhero over here. People keep coming up to me saying, 'What's Andrew Flintoff like?'"

On Australia's Flintoff craze.

What to WATCH

SET Max

World Series

Third ODI

Live at 10:00 am

TEN Sports

FIFA WC Qualifiers

Bolivia vs Brazil

Live at 2:00 am (Monday)

Argentina vs Peru

Live at 4:00 am (Monday)