



Did U Know?

Bowlers are allowed to have a maximum of five-finger grip holes on a regulation bowling ball.



Adam Gilchrist

(Australia cricket vice-captain)
"I do believe 400-plus scores are going to become parts of the one-day game. Slowly but surely they may become the norm, but they're a little way off. Batsmen are power hitting earlier and Twenty20 is going to show teams how expansive they can be."



ESPN

Pakistan v South Africa
Second Test, Day 2
Live from 2:30pm
Chelsea v Liverpool
English Premiership
Live at 6.40pm
Fulham v Tottenham
English Premiership
Live at 9.30pm
Sevilla v Villarreal
Spanish Primera Liga
Live at 2.55am (Sunday)

STAR Sports

Australian Open
Men's/Women's 3rd Round
Live at 6.00am
Newcastle v West Ham
English Premiership
Live at 8.55pm
Man City v Blackburn
English Premiership
Live at 11.10pm

ZEE SPORTS

Ascoli v Atalanta
Italian Serie A
Live at 11.00pm

Oram playing next game

BBC ONLINE, undated

New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram has recovered from a hamstring injury to face England in Adelaide on Tuesday.

Oram will rejoin the Black Caps after Sunday's one-day series match against Australia in Sydney.

Manager Lindsay Crocker said Kyle Mills could also be on the same flight if he proves his fitness after knee trouble.

Fast bowler Shane Bond had a back scan on Friday, with Crocker admitting: "He will not play on Sunday and is in doubt for Tuesday in Adelaide as well."

Another all-rounder, Scott Styris, pulled out of a provincial match on Friday with a strained calf muscle.

He expects to be back running again this weekend, though, and his availability for Auckland's next match will be monitored daily.

Oram, 28, is more dangerous as a batsman in tests, where he averages almost 40, than one-day cricket but he has taken 99 wickets in 87 ODIs.

Sammy out of tour

BBC ONLINE, undated

All-rounder Darren Sammy has been ruled out of the West Indies' tour of India with a hamstring injury.

Dwayne Smith instead arrived with the squad in Mumbai on Thursday, with the first of four one-day games on Sunday.

Meanwhile, 25-year-old all-rounder Rayad Emrit is looking forward to the challenge of facing the world's best, on his first senior tour.

"I am excited to bowl at (Sachin)

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Butt turns up heat

SPORTS REPORTER



The fourth round of the Kai-Altech Premier Division Cricket League began yesterday with plenty of shake-ups as defending champions Old DOHS and City Club fell at the hands of minnows.

While Abahani stretched their winning run with a comfortable six-wicket victory against pointless Indra Road at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium, the DOHS team's winning streak was snapped by Kalabagan who rode on an explosive hundred by Pakistani Shahbaz Butt to secure a four-wicket victory at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

But it was newcomers Partex Sporting Club who pulled off the biggest surprise when they won a low-scoring match by an identical margin to pile more woe on a Shahriar Nafees-led City Club at BKS.

Abahani are only the unbeaten team in the tournament and last year's runners-up Sonargaon Cricketers can only share the honour with them after the fourth round if they overcome today's hurdle against Biman at Fatullah.

DOHS-KALABAGAN

Captain Akram Khan won the all-important toss and decided to bat

first but in the end it seemed the only bright point for DOHS as the day belonged fully to their lowly opponents, once the ball rolled onto the pitch.

27-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman Shahbaz was the hero with a blazing 102 and his 174-run fourth wicket association with opener Mahbubul Karim (72) helped Kalabagan earn their second success in four games after recovering from the early collapse which had left them 10-3 in reply to 239-6.

If the top-order batsmen, espe-



SHAHBAZ BUTT

cially Tigers' new opener Mehrab Hossain caused the damage by hitting slow which enabled DOHS to put 239 on the board on a benign pitch then the buffet bowling with the exception of new-ball bowler Shahadat Hossain, who returned

with figures of 5-41, made the task easy for Kalabagan to achieve the target (242) with five overs to spare.

Last match hero Khaled Mahmud turned villain when he gave away 74 runs in his 10-over quota without any wicket.

Man-of-the-match Shahbaz punished the most during his 93-ball innings that featured 17 well-struck boundaries all over the park while Mahbubul struck nine fours in his 93-ball knock.

Earlier Tamim Iqbal, who smashed 49 off 58 balls with eight boundaries, played with his natural style but his partner Mehrab (32 off 90 balls) slowed down the rate at the other end as DOHS got a good but not flying start on the batting-friendly surface. The pair added 69 runs in 18.1 overs in the opening stand.

Sri Lankan Hasanth Fernando (48 off 64 balls) and Ehsanul Haque (37 off 36 balls) were the other notable scorers.

Kamrul Islam was the pick of DOHS bowlers claiming three wickets for 60 runs.

ABAHANI-INDRA

Abahani thrived on a 95-run fourth wicket stand between Kuntal Chanda and Imran Abbas after the bowlers laid the foundation to register a fourth win in a row.

Opener Kuntal remained not out on 54 off 125 balls and Pakistani

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PHOTO: AFP
Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar celebrates in his usual manner after dismissing South Africa all-rounder Shaun Pollock (not in picture) on the first day of the second Test at St. George's Park in Port Elizabeth on Friday.

India's new start

Cricket

AFP, Nagpur

Under-performing India hope to turn over a new leaf when they launch their World Cup preparations with a four-match series against the West Indies here from Sunday.

The limited-overs face-off against the World Cup hosts and four more games against Sri Lanka next month will help India decide a winning combination for the March 13-April 28 showpiece.

India, ranked number three at the start of 2006, slumped badly in the latter part of the year where they lost 13 of their last 17 one-day internationals.

Rahul Dravid's men were reduced to a bunch of groping novices as India ended the year with a 4-0 drubbing in South Africa and have now won only two of their last 10 matches, dropping to sixth in the

rankings.

Worried selectors cracked the whip, dropping the under-performing duo of opener Virender Sehwag and all-rounder Irfan Pathan for the first two West Indian matches and recalling former captain Sourav Ganguly.

Ganguly, 34, who made a comeback to the Test squad in South Africa, is expected to open the batting with Robin Uthappa on Sunday in his first one-day appearance in 16 months.

Veteran Sachin Tendulkar, one-day cricket's most successful batsman with 14,537 runs and 40 centuries, was elevated as vice-captain despite making just 248 runs in his last 10 matches at an average of 24.80.

"We can't afford to lose any more, we must win every match going into the World Cup," said chairman of selectors Dilip Vengsarkar.

The West Indians tormented

India last year by winning six of their last seven one-dayers.

Brian Lara's men also reached the Champions Trophy final in India in November with stunning wins over eventual winners Australia in the league and South Africa in the semifinals.

The West Indies, however, lost both the Test and one-day series in Pakistan in December and will also hope to make a fresh start in India as the World Cup at home nears.

"This is our last series before the World Cup and will give us a fair idea of where we stand, where we need to improve and what the best combination will be," said Lara.

"We have played good one-day cricket over the last year or so, especially against India, but I know Rahul, Sachin and the others will come hard at us this time."

"We are ready for the challenge." The West Indians, who will miss

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Storm damages Lord's

PTI, London

Strong winds have caused damage to the Lord's ground forcing evacuation of the non-essential staff from the building.

The gales blew away part of the Tavern Stand roof at the ground on Thursday and landed it on some parked cars in St John's Wood Road, a BBC report said.

The incident left two motorists with minor injuries.

Besides, four men were hurt when winds brought down a wooden hoarding close to Euston Station.

The gales also affected train and bus services in the city.

Twenty20 WC dates clash

PTI, Karachi

The late scheduling of the inaugural Twenty-20 World Championship was to be blamed for the overlapping of tour dates of Pakistan, India and Australia, and the officials of the three boards will meet in Fujairah on January 25-26 to resolve the issue, a PCB official said Friday.

"There is a major problem with the scheduling in the Future Tours Programme due to the late inclusion of the first Twenty20 World Cup in September which is a two-week event starting around September 9," a PCB official told PTI.

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Shoaib sends SA tumbling

Cricket

AFP, Port Elizabeth

Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar made a sensational return to Test cricket as South Africa were bowled out for 124 on the first day of the second Test at St George's Park Friday.

In reply, Pakistan lost their first wicket before they had scored a run. They were 17 for two at tea.

Shoaib pried open the South African batting by taking the first two wickets and was a constant threat, bowling at high pace and exploiting a pitch which offered him steep bounce. He finished with four for 36 and was recorded at speeds of up to 150kmh.

The controversial bowler also hit South African all-rounder Shaun Pollock on the top of his left foot with a fast yorker. Pollock needed lengthy treatment on the field.

He was dismissed by Shoaib soon afterwards. Pollock did not take the field at the start of Pakistan's first innings but appeared shortly before tea.

Leg-spinner Danish Kaneria took three for 36 and Mohammad Asif two for 34 as South Africa crashed to their lowest total against Pakistan. The previous worst was 214 at Faisalabad in 1997-98.

Shoaib sparked the South African collapse when AB de Villiers tried to hook his 16th delivery and edged the ball to

wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal. Then he had Hashim Amla, caught down the leg side off a glove.

Since his previous Test appearance against India in January last year, Shoaib, 31, has suffered from ankle and knee injuries and was banned from international cricket for using performance-enhancing drugs.

He was cleared by a Pakistani tribunal last month and joined the team in South Africa as cover for Umar Gul, who is recovering from an ankle injury.

Astonishingly, on a pitch which did not appear to have any demons, Pakistan put down four chances, none of which proved costly.

In contrast to the first Test, which South Africa won by seven wickets, Pakistan fielded a potent four-man bowling attack, with Shoaib and Mohammad Sami replacing Shahid Nazir and Navedul Hasan.

Kaneria came into the attack when Shoaib was rested after taking two for 17. Smith charged down the pitch and slammed the spinner's fourth ball past mid-off for four but was out for 28 off the next ball when he was deceived by a googly.

Akmal could not hold the chance but it bounced up for Younis Khan to catch it at slip.

Ashwell Prince was dropped by Akmal off Sami on two but was out four balls later, caught at first slip.

Kaneria had Jacques Kallis

dropped at slip by Younis on 11 and Gibbs was dropped by Akmal off the next ball, only to miss a sweep off the next delivery to be leg before.

Kallis fell for 24 in Shoaib's second spell soon after lunch.

Mark Boucher made top score for South Africa with 35 before he top-edged an attempted sweep off Kaneria's slip.

Makhaya Ntini dismissed both openers before tea, with Imran Farhat edging a catch to third slip and Mohammad Hafeez caught off Gibbs lbw b Akmal.

Boucher c Younis b Kaneria 28
Amla c Akmal b Akhtar 5
Kallis c Akmal b Akhtar 24
Prince c Farhat b Sami 2
Gibbs lbw b Kaneria 2
Ntini c Kaneria b Asif 10
Harris c Hafeez b Asif 4
Extras: (lb-3, nc-5) 8

Total: (All out in 39.5 overs) 124

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-27, 3-40, 4-49, 5-58, 6-83, 7-89, 8-120, 9-120

Bowler O M R W

Akhtar 11 2 36 4

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Hussey fends off England

Cricket

AFP, Brisbane

Australia secured a four-wicket win over valiant England in their one-day cricket international at the Gabba here Friday, almost certainly sealing a place in the finals of the tri-nations series.

After bowling England out for a

meagre 155, the Australians were in trouble at 93 for five and 108 for six before Michael Hussey came to the rescue once again and guided the home side to victory with 11.2 overs to spare.

Hussey said the Gabba wicket offered just enough to the bowlers to make batting difficult, hence the low scoring match.

"I found it very difficult to get any rhythm with my bat -- I never



PHOTO: AFP

Australia bats