

Graveney comforts Fletcher

AFP, London

Duncan Fletcher's job as England coach after the latest demoralising one-day hammering by Australia is not under threat, according to England chairman of selectors David Graveney.

Fletcher's one-day record against the top eight Test-playing nations is poor but, with the World Cup in the West Indies looming, Graveney is convinced Fletcher retains the full confidence of the ailing England dressing room.

And Graveney insists the players are desperate to claim a much-needed victory over New Zealand on Tuesday to ease the pressure on their coach.

Graveney told BBC Radio Five Live's Sportsweek: "Duncan is hurting the same as everyone else -- and when I say everyone else I mean the players, the management and every England cricket fan."

"He is trying to do the job on a day-to-day basis with the same intensity and I am sure the players know if there is one thing they want to do on Tuesday it is to win for Duncan Fletcher."

"Duncan Fletcher is still the England coach and he retains the support of everyone close to the team and the team in particular. Our main objective is to start winning some games on this tour."

Rather than using Fletcher as a convenient scapegoat for an Ashes tour rated by many experts as the worst in England cricket history, Graveney insists the players much shoulder much of the blame for the sorry displays.

"They have to assess their performances each day by looking at themselves and saying, 'have I done everything I possible can for this team?'

"The two performances in Adelaide were way off the standards we expect from this national team. I don't want to make excuses because I don't think that is particularly appropriate at this stage."

Javed lifts

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Mushfiqur 1, Elahi 48, Reza 24, Sanwar 4, Kadir 13*, Murad 0*, extras 11, Tareq 1-39, Kamru 2-13, Wasim 2-42).

Result: Biman won by three wickets.

BROTHERS: 146 all out in 45.4 overs (Shahriar 14, Hannan 10, Imran 40, Labir 11, Bashir 10, Anisur 9, Nasir 15, Haq 4, Ghosh 5, Rashid 0, Shafiq 0*, extras 30, Shahadat 1-23, Dollar 2-28, Razzaq 1-32, Mehrab 3-16).

DOHS: 152-4 in 30.1 overs (Tamim 22, Mehrab 23, Shamsur 7, Ehsanul 45*, Nafid 9, Akram 22*, extras 24, Nasir 2-29, Rashedur 2-39).

Result: Old DOHS won by six wickets.

History

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86 times, a 46 percent success rate. The official website www.australianopen.com had 21 million hits from 4.4 million visitors unable to attend the tournament Down Under in person.

More than 30 percent of Internet visitors were from Europe, 22 percent from the United States, 15 percent from Australia and 11.5 percent from Asia.

The most viewed profiles belonged to women's finalists Maria Sharapova and Serena Williams and men's finalists Federer and Gonzalez, with American Andy Roddick also attracting interest.

RMFS, Khulna

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Licence holder. He added that they have already contacted Ugandan striker Dolly.

Meanwhile, old-Dhaka outfit Rahmatganj have secured contracts of 18 local players and will soon register them with the Bangladesh Football Federation.

"Our budget is Tk one crore and our highest paid player is getting Tk five lakh," informed Rahmatganj general secretary Tipu Sultan without naming the top paid footballer.

Rahmatganj, who began their journey with the slogan -- Sports, Peace and Unity -- in 1933, were promoted to first division in 1964 as unbeaten second division champions and were in tremendous form in the early years of the new millennium, finishing fourth and third in 2000 and 2001 seasons in the Premier League.

"We won the first division league title in 2005 and have a fighting team. We will recruit about three foreign players to strengthen the squad," said former national goal-keeper and coach Motaleb Hossain, who holds AFC's 'B' Licence.

Star player and captain Shoyeb Hossain Sony, however, was a bit optimistic. "We will fight for good results and want to finish the top half," said the central defender, who had talks with Mohammedi and had decided to stay at his old team.

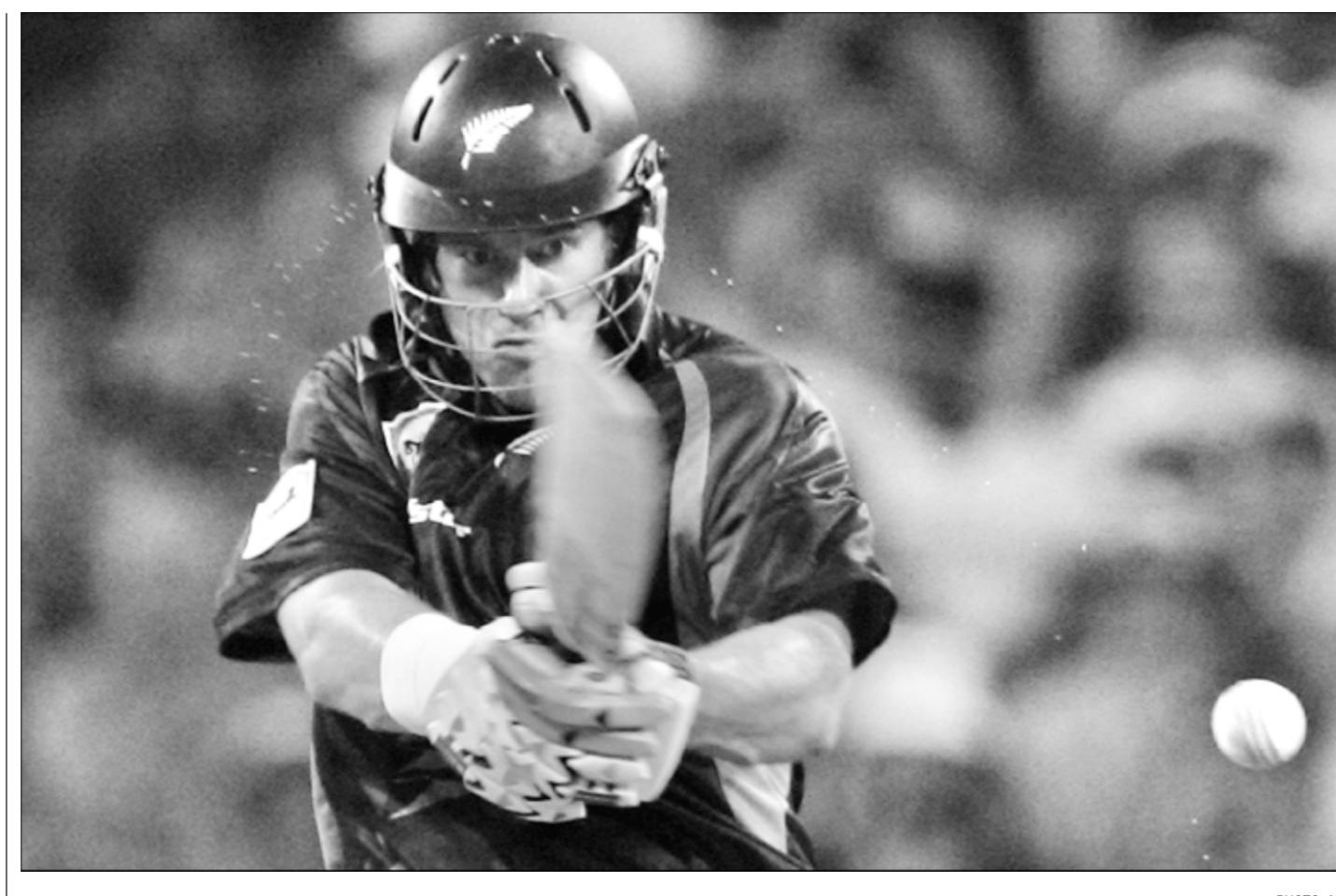


PHOTO: AFP
New Zealand all-rounder Jacob Oram gives it a good crack on way to his blazing hundred during the Commonwealth Bank series game against Australia at the WACA in Perth on Sunday.

Aussies run Kiwis out

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Centuries to Ricky Ponting and Matthew Hayden helped Australia maintain their winning streak with an unexpectedly narrow eight-run victory over a plucky New Zealand in their triangular series one-day international at the WACA Ground here on Sunday.

Ponting won the toss and elected to bat in extremely hot conditions. His decision was vindicated as Australia capitalised on New Zealand fielding errors to post the highest score ever in a one-day international at the ground, making 343 for five.

The previous best was the West Indies' 309-6 in 1985, with Hayden and Ponting scoring the first two centuries of the series.

In reply, the Kiwis produced a valiant attempt at an unlikely victory, also eclipsing the old record in making 335 for five.

Recalled Black Caps opener Lou Vincent led the resistance with 66, before failing to a bad-umpiring decision when he was adjudged lbw by Asad Rauf even though the ball struck bat rather than pad.

Jacob Oram, who made 86 against England on Friday, then continued his fine form by weighing in with a magnificent 101 not out that was his first one-day international century and included six massive sixes.

Oram faced just 71 balls in reaching his hundred and put on 137 for sixth-wicket with Brendon McCullum (46 not out) as the pair

threatened an incredible victory.

However, Australia held on to make it six wins from as many matches in the tri-series and extend their winning streak this summer to 12 games, including Tests, one-dayers and Twenty20.

In the Australian innings, Hayden made the most of some extraordinary good luck to make 117 -- his first one-day international hundred in 23 months -- and Ponting's 111 was typically assured.

The pair added 200 for the second wicket, also a record for the venue.

Their eyes firmly on Tuesday's crucial game against England, the Black Caps rested opening bowlers Shane Bond and James Franklin at the venue where they would have been most suited, but again didn't help themselves with some shoddy fielding.

Hayden was dropped three times in making his sixth one-day international century, before finally being clean bowled by Daniel Vettori as he attempted another hefty swipe.

Vettori had dropped a sitter off Hayden from the second ball the left-hander faced and before he had scored.

When Hayden was just four, Ross Taylor horribly misjudged a skied pull shot at mid-on and muffed the catch.

The left-hander was also dropped on 79, when substitute bowler Hamish Marshall couldn't hang on to a chance at mid-on.

With his place at the upcoming World Cup in the balance after his previous indifferent form, Hayden

made the most of his good fortune, reaching his century from 104 balls with 11 fours.

Ponting, on the other hand, didn't give a chance in notching his 21st one-day international century in 113 balls, with seven fours and one six. He was named man of the match.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming tried seven bowlers with little impact.

Vettori was the only New Zealand bowler spared in the onslaught, with 1-34 from 10 overs.

Oram went for 50 from five overs, Mark Gillespie returned 1-76 from 10 overs and Jeetan Patel finished with 1-67 from his 10 overs.

The Australians put on 101 in the last 10 overs as they hit a string of sixes to gallop past the old record for the ground.

Andrew Symonds made 24 from 13 balls, with two sixes, while local favourite Mike Hussey again finished not out in making 29 from 16 balls.

Hussey cleared the fence three times in his brief stay.

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Total: (For five wks in 50 overs) 343 Fall of wickets: 1-28, 2-228, 3-254, 4-275, 5-292.

Bowler O M R W
Mills 10 1 72 1
Gillespie 10 1 76 1
Oram 5 0 50 0
Vettori 10 0 34 1
Patel 10 0 67 1
McMillan 3 0 26 1
Taylor 2 0 16 0

NEW ZEALAND

Vincent lbw b Clarke 66
Fleming c Gilchrist b McGrath 28
Fulton c Hayden b Johnson 23
Taylor b Clarke 39
McMillan run out (Johnson) 5
Oram not out 101
McCullum not out 46
Extras: (b-2, lb-5, w-18, nb-2) 27

Total: (For five wks in 50 overs) 335 Fall of wickets: 1-47, 2-107, 3-142, 4-150, 5-198.

Bowler O M R W
Lee 10 0 53 0
Bracken 10 1 75 0
McGrath 10 0 72 1
Johnson 6 0 48 1
Clarke 9 0 48 2
Symonds 5 0 32 0

Result: Australia won by eight runs.

Man-of-the-match: Ricky Ponting

Toss: Australia
Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS)
Asad Rauf (PAK)

STANDINGS

Standings in the triangular one-day series after Australia beat New Zealand on Sunday (played, won, lost, bonus points, points):

Australia 6 6 0 3 27
New Zealand 5 1 3 1 5
England 5 1 4 0 4

Lara pleased with resolve

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Brian Lara paid tribute to his West Indies side's fighting qualities after they beat India by three wickets in the third one-day in Madras (Chennai).

India were racing along at 232-3 but collapsed to 268 before the tourists survived a slump of their own to win.

Skipper Lara said: "It didn't look good after 29 overs but the guys bowled well after that and pulled the game back."

"It was unbelievable, the guys held everything in the field and it was a commanding performance with the bat."

Lara, who hit 83 and put on 127

with Marlon Samuels (98), added: "We spoke in the dressing room about coming from behind."

"We are a team that a lot of people say are unpredictable and it was important for us to fight."

"Our backs were against the wall but we did a really good job."

India, who won the first two games, were on course for a massive score after Robin Uthappa smashed 70 off only 41 balls.

Sachin Tendulkar (60) and captain Rahul Dravid (57) also looked comfortable until the innings fell away.

"We got the right kind of start but to lose seven wickets for about 40 runs in the end was just not good enough," Dravid said.

"It was a very good wicket for one-day cricket and the sort where we should have got 330-340 to be

competitive and be in the game but we were well short."

"We tried our best and got some early wickets but Samuels and Lara took the game away from us."

Dilip wants

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made a successful return to the Test side on the tour of South Africa, emerging as the highest run getter for the Indians.

Vengsarkar said Tendulkar, who broke a lean patch with a half-century in third ODI in Chennai on Saturday, was perhaps struggling to match his own expectations.

"I want to tell you that he is one of the best cricketers in the world," he said in an interview to BBC Hindi.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ABAHANI: 231-8 in 50 overs (Zahurul 12, Naeem 10, Nazim 62, Tushar 28, Sujith 45, Shuvu 31 n.o., Mashud 8, Mashrafee 1, Ziaur 20, Shahjada 1 n.o., extras 23, Manjurul 3-31, Tapash 0-32, Hasibul 1-66, Aftab 3-38, Sakib 0-31, Sunny 1-24).

MOHAMMEDAN: 152 all out in 41.5 overs (Imtiaz 0, Junaid 19, Aftab 12, Sakib 7, Faisal 1, Bashir 8, Sahagir 4, Sunny 56 n.o., Tapash 4, Hasibul 6, Manjurul 20, extras 15, Mashrafee 5-24, Ziaur 2-36, Shahjada 2-19, Talha 0-26, Sujith 0-14, Naeem 0-13).

Result: Abahani won by 79 runs.

victory came too easy and I have never seen such an embarrassing one-sided match between Abahani and Mohammedan," said the national wicketkeeper, who has represented both the sides.

Mashud, yet to recover from a thumb injury that restricts him from standing behind the stumps, added that Abahani's teamwork has been the key in their success so far.

"We have come only halfway through. We have been playing good cricket and have to continue to win the title."

He admitted that the team will badly miss Mashrafee and Tushar, who will be on national duty for the rest of the firsts.

"We have back-up bowlers but Tushar's form in the middle-order would be a big blow but other big teams will also miss key players."

Mashrafee said that he had a welcome break and it was good to be fresh before a big match.

"I feel very happy that my perfor-

Federer's

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The first set lasted 65 minutes, two minutes longer than Serena Williams needed to win the women's final 6-1, 6-2 over Maria Sharapova on Saturday afternoon.

Just as in last year's victory over Marcos Baghatis, Federer had to beat an opponent who had become a crowd darling.

Amid chants of "Vamos Fernando!" and "Come on, Speedy!" one particularly fervent fan clutched the corners of a Chilean flag and kissed the corners on key points.

Federer had plenty of backhand, too, with a number of faces painted like the Swiss flag. One fan waved a sign that proclaimed "Federer is better," and the Swiss star backed it up.

Gonzalez was trying to run around his backhand to whip powerful forehands and Federer sought to keep him from doing it, leading to a number of backhand-to-backhand rallies.