

Lee scares

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to the World Cup, the match is looming as a pivotal moment in Daryl Tuffey's resurrection as a New Zealand new ball bowler.

The last time the 28-year-old played for New Zealand it was a disastrous two-over spell against Australia which conceded 25 runs.

In the six games played so far for the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy -- named after two of the most famous cricketing families on either side of the Tasman -- Australia have won three, New Zealand two and one match was washed out.

TEAMS

NEW ZEALAND (from): Stephen Fleming (captain), Lou Vincent, Ross Taylor, Scott Styris, Craig McMillan, Jacob Oram, Brendon McCullum, Daniel Vettori, James Franklin, Shane Bond, Daryl Tuffey, Mark Gillespie, Jeetan Patel.

AUSTRALIA (from): Michael Hussey (captain), Matthew Hayden, Shane Watson, Brad Hodge, Brad Haddin, Michael Clarke, Phil Jaques, Adam Voges, Cameron White, Brett Lee, Brad Hogg, Mitchell Johnson, Nathan Bracken, Glenn McGrath.

Bremen sound

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Frings then underlined Werder's superiority when he took a Klose pass and stroked in, with Johnny Heitinga just failing to clear.

Werder should really have added more goals -- Diego and Hugo Almeida both missed sitters in the final 20 minutes -- but coach Thomas Schaaf was not about to complain after the team bounced back from two successive league defeats.

"We showed tonight that we're back on form," Schaaf told reporters. "We're really had them up against it."

Cruciani is here

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The three players -- central defender Marino Carlos Caporale, attacking midfielder Marino Cesar Sanchez and striker Hector Hernando Parodi -- have experience of playing in the Americas and Europe.

"Caporale is a born leader who loves to control the game from the back. He is also good in the air. Sanchez will be the free midfielder and he is very skilled when moving the ball is necessary."

"But my bet would be on Parodi, who is an intelligent striker with rich background. He played for first division side Racing -- one of the big five in Argentina -- in 2004 and also played in France and Costa Rica. He returned to Buenos Aires last year but had to play in second division where he has scored 21 goals. Before coming here, he scored a hatrick in a friendly game," informed Cruciani.

Caporale was last playing in Mexico while Sanchez in Italy.

"I was told to bring three because bringing more would mean dropping good local players. Still, if I think we need more, we will see to that."

He added that a promise made to Abahani official Ashrafuddin Chunnu that he will join them, brought him back to Bangladesh. "I kept that promise and I also missed the country during the last five months."

Cruciani was involved in his own business in recently but said he has signed a contract with a Georgian first division club based in Tbilisi where he will join his guru Cayetano Rodriguez.

When asked whether transformation from the national team to club was a challenge, Cruciani replied: "I have nothing to prove to the BFF. All I have to do is work for

my team. I have just over two weeks to prepare Abahani but the advantage is that I know most of the players and they also know what I would want for them. I think the Argentines would be able to build a rapport with them quickly."

He led Bangladesh to finish runners-up in the SAFF Championship in Karachi, which was followed up by a 1-0 away win over Pakistan that earned the country a place in the 2007 Asian Cup qualifiers. The Argentine, however, was barred from sitting in the bench in the rest of the tournament due to his attack on a referee.

His last assignment was in Colombo, where Bangladesh failed to pass the group stage in the South Asian Games.

Cruciani would be the sixth foreigner to have coached both national team and local club after Iranian World Cupper Nasser Hejazi (Mohammedan), South Korea's Man Young Kang (Muktijoddha and Mohammedan), Iraqi World Cupper Samir Shakir (Abahani and Mohammedan) and Austrian George Kottan (Muktijoddha).

Eto'o won't

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while Marca said "Barcelona explodes."

Papers speculated on the consequences of the affair, with Mundo Deportivo saying Eto'o had caused "the first serious blaze in the dressing room" since Rijkaard took charge in 2003.

"It is possible that nothing will be the same again but for Barcelona's sake efforts must be made to avoid this having a definitive effect on the dressing room," the paper said in an editorial.

Chittagong make up final 8

SPORTS REPORTER

Chittagong became the last team to qualify for the 3rd JFA Cup final round when they edged Comilla by a solitary goal in an exciting zonal final at the Comilla Stadium.

Mohon Pal separated the two sides with a 20-minute goal upset the hosts.

Chittagong join Khulna, Kishoreganj, Dhaka, Chuadanga, Sirajganj, Natore and BKSP in the eight-round finals, which is expected to begin on February 23 in Dhaka.

The eight teams will be split into two groups in the robin league.

LOCAL SNIPS

FROM PAGE 21
Premier League at the Kabaddi court.

The firemen beat Sonali Bank 14-11 without any losses while in the other match of the day, Azad Sporting Club crushed Jatrabari Faruq Smriti Sangas 51-25 with three losses.

Fire Service joined Bangladesh Rifles, Army and Police in the semifinals which takes play today.

NATIONAL JUNIOR CHESS

Minhazuddin Ahmed, Shamima Akther, Sharif Hossain and Abdullah Al Saif are all in the lead of the Basic Bank 28th National Junior Chess competition at the Federation hallroom.

Minhaz defeated Saimon Siddique Rahman, Shamima beat Nipu, Sharif beat Mahin while Saif trounced Shakhat as they all lead with four points each.

Rajshahi well

FROM PAGE 21
Nazimuddin 5, Ehsanul 5 batting, extras 4, Shafiq 1-15, Mashfiq 2-4).

SYLHET FIRST INNINGS: 170 all out in 59.3 overs (Rahman 3, Imtiaz 4, Enamul 12, Saif 48, Alok 29, Maola 2, Mabud 16, Rezau 28, Nazmul 8, Hasibul 6, Nabil 0, extras 14, Sajidul 1-40, Salahuddin 4-40, Arman 2-14).

BARISAL FIRST INNINGS: 93-5 in 36 overs (Imran 14, Hannan 29, Rakibul 0, Mehdi 13, Shahin 21, Raisul 13 batting, Iftekhar 0 batting, extras 3, Hasibul 1-27, Nazmul 1-9, Enamul 1-11, Nabil 2-19).

KHULNA FIRST INNINGS: 104-4 in 43 overs (Imrul 25, Sajjadul 5, Nahidul 43 batting, Monirul 5, Manzurul 15, Asadullah 3 batting, extras 8, Talha 1-32, Mahbubul 1-24, Arifat 1-22, Shariful 1-18).

Matthaeus wants

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Bayern, currently fourth in Germany's top league and 11 points behind leaders Schalke 04, sacked Felix Magath at the end of last month and appointed former coach Ottmar Hitzfeld until the end of the season.

Matthaeus told Bild that Bayern should concentrate for now on regaining stability and beating Real Madrid, their next opponents in the Champions League.

But he said that if Bayern offered him the coaching job he would be prepared to negotiate a solution that was beneficial to all.

"I am convinced Lothar will have a great career and he'll one day be Bayern coach," the newspaper quoted Hitzfeld as saying.

Barca chaos

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Nou Camp and they have played three times. I would like to keep this record."

Reds captain Steven Gerrard added: "We have to have belief in our ability and we must not spend too much time worrying about Barcelona."

"If you do that you will give yourself nightmares because they are a great side. We know what we are capable of and we know the performance we can come up with on the big occasion."

"We would love to go there and win, we are not a team that goes anywhere to play for a draw. But it would not be a bad result for us."

"A lot of our lads have plenty of experience of playing in the Nou Camp, so there is no fear factor."

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Dreams shattered

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would have been better had I not been picked for Zimbabwe. Then I could have played in the domestic league and maybe a hundred or two here would have got me a World Cup ticket like some of the others," said Tushar.

Despite the feeling of frustration, the 24-year-old refused to allow disappointment to get the better of him. "I take this as a challenge. I will try to perform well for the Bangladesh A team against England A if I am selected and hopefully I will make a comeback for the national team sooner rather than later."

Mehrab Hossain (Jr), the 19-year-old opener, took his exclusion sportingly but admitted that it was not expected.

"There is no pressure. You can call it a challenge which I am absolutely determined to win by performing to my level best."

This has been a make-believe season for opener Tamim.

"Before the start of the Premier League if someone had told me that I'd be going to Zimbabwe with the national squad, I would have laughed it off. Imagine what my reaction would be at this (World Cup selection). This is beyond my imagination," said Tamim.

"After the Zimbabwe tour I saw a glimmer of hope as I played reasonably well in the last ODI. So when I found my name in the World Cup squad on Channel i it was unbelievable. Now all my friend and close ones will celebrate this occasion with a 'Bachelor's Party' tonight."

Tamim, the youngest member of the side at 17, also promised to play in his natural aggressive way in the World Cup. "I can not guarantee

healed the same day. Team physio Paul (Close) has also given me a green signal about my fitness," claimed Sharif.

"It's a completely different emotion story for Rahim, Tamim, Javed, Saleh, Rasel and Tapash."

"I was pretty confident about making the squad after my performance in Zimbabwe. I have got my reward. Obviously I am delighted," said Rahim. He also brushed aside suggestions that he will be under pressure to step in the shoes of Mashud, someone who can be regarded as one of the very best behind the wicket in international cricket.

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Rasel's fellow paceman Tapash heard the good news from one of his friends who saw the squad being announced on television. "At first I could not believe it. However this is not the time to celebrate or feel satisfied. I want to celebrate this call up by performing well in the World Cup."

success but I can assure you that my approach will be the same."

Experienced campaigners Javed and Saleh were the relatively surprise inclusions in the World Cup squad. For Javed the World Cup has always been like a mirage. On the last two occasions he had been in the running only to be left out at the last moment.

"I had performance under my belt yet I could not get the call up in the last two tournaments, so I was overjoyed when I heard that I am in the 2007 squad. I was optimistic because I have been performing well in the domestic league."

"It was not an unexpected call up for me but I could not believe my ears when I first heard it from skipper Habibul Bashar. Thanks to the Almighty," said Saleh who has been in excellent batting form lately in domestic cricket.

Left arm pacer Syed Rasel was rather philosophical.

"I knew that my chances of playing in the World Cup were 50-50. I was quite disappointed when I was dropped from the national team for the Zimbabwe tour despite a decent success rate. So this time I want to cement my place in the team. Regarding World Cup? I dream of playing at least one match if not all."

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Wednesday:

PAKISTAN: 153 all out in 40.5 overs (Malik 43 not out, Nazir 22, Akmal 22; Pollock 5-23, Kallis 2-19)

SOUTH AFRICA

Smith a Akmal b Asif 0
De Villiers not out 71
Kallis not out 71
Extras: (lb-3, nb-6, w-5) 14

Total: For 1 wk in 28.2 overs) 156

Fall of wicket: 1-1

Did not bat: Gibbs, Prince, Boucher, Kemp, Pollock, Hall, Langeveldt, Ntini

Bowler O M R W

Asif 5 0 24 1

Itikhar 7 2 26 0

Naved 5 0 40 0

Razzaq 5 0 25 0

Malik 4.2 0 29 0

Hafeez 2 0 9 0

Result: South Africa won by nine wickets and clinch the 5-ODI series 3-1.

Man-of-the-match: Shaun Pollock.

Man-of-the-series: Shaun Pollock.

Gunners win a humdinger

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Bolton manager Sam Allardyce criticised referee Chris Foy for red-carding Ben Haim. "Far more and far worse went on than what Ben Haim did," said Allardyce. "He shouldn't have been sent off. I can't fault my players because I thought they were different class."

"But Freddie Ljungberg's has scored a terrific goal and that really hurt us."

Bolton had lost just one of the previous eight meetings between the two clubs yet Wenger continued his preference for second-choice goalkeeper Manuel Almunia in domestic cup competitions.

Having lost on their last three visits to the Reebok, that undefeated run ought to have been tested more severely yet the visitors rarely looked in danger once they eased into an early lead cour-

YOUR SAY ON TIGERS SELECTION

still young and might make it to the team someday