

Two schools suspended

SPORTS REPORTER

The technical committee of school tournament came down heavily on two participating teams in the ongoing Standard Chartered Young Tigers School Cricket Competition.

Players from two Dhanmondi-based schools Happy Times International School and BCSIR High School has been suspended from this year and next year's all BCB competitions.

It was further recommended that the games teacher of BCSIR High School will not be permitted to handle cricketing activities in 2007 and 2008.

The committee took the decision on February 23, only made public yesterday, on the evidence placed by the technical committee regarding an incident that occurred between the teams at the Iqbal Road Ground on February 10 at the end of their match.

Canada seal easy victory

AFP, St John's

Canada warmed-up for their three-tournament international series against fellow World Cup finalists Bangladesh and Bermuda with a five-wicket win over Antigua and Barbuda in a practice match at the Antigua Recreation Ground.

Chasing 232 for victory, Canada, one of the 16 teams taking part in the 2007 World Cup 2007 in the Caribbean, reached their target with 44 balls to spare, following half-centuries from Abdool Samad and Ashif Mulla.

Samad laid the foundation for Canada with the top score of 64 off 70 balls which included five fours and onesix.

He added 87 for the second wicket with Ashish Bagai, who made 45, before Mulla came to the wicket and guided the Canadians to victory with an unbeaten 56 which included five fours and two sixes from 51 balls.

Mulla and George Codrington, the Barbados-born Canadian captain, put on 54 unbroken to see their side home, after the visitors wobbled to 178 for five.

Earlier, Kerry Mentore led the way with 55 that included five fours and one six off 96 balls, but the rest of the Antigua and Barbuda batting failed to add substance, and the hosts were restricted to 231 for eight off 50 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA: 231 for five off 50 overs (Kerry Mentore 55, Orlando Peters 33, Austin Richards 32, Justin Athanaze 30 not out; George Codrington 2-33, Kevin Santhar 2-40)

CANADA: 232 for five off 42.4 overs (Abdool Samad 64, Ashif Mulla 56 not out, Ashish Bagai 45, George Codrington 21 not out; Gavin Tonge 2-60)

SL want

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"The pitches, apart from Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain, were very unfamiliar," he said. "So a lot of adjustments will have to be made."

Sri Lanka are drawn with India, Bangladesh and Bermuda in Group B of the preliminary league, with the top two advancing to the next round.

"Every match will be important, even if it is against Bermuda," said Jayawardene. "We will approach the tournament on a match by match basis. We can't afford to look far ahead."

Veteran opener Sanath Jayasuriya, whose big hitting at the top of the order contributed to Sri Lanka's success in 1996, said he would bat the same way again.

Tigers start

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Cann b Baishya 33
Mukuddem run out 32
Borden not out 19

Extras: (b-2, lb-1, w-12, nb-2) 17
Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs) 205
Did not bat: Leverock, Hurdle.
Fall of wickets: 1-18, 2-40, 3-80, 4-83, 5-83, 6-128, 7-152, 8-205.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Baishya	10	1	53	1
Rasel	10	2	31	1
Razzak	9	2	32	1
Shakib	8	1	36	1
Rafique	10	0	38	2
Aftab	3	0	12	1

BANGLADESH
Iqbal c Pitcher b Tucker 11
Nafees not out 104
Aftab c Mukuddem b Hurdle 40
Shakib not out 42
Extras: (w-6, nb-3) 9
Total: (For 2 wickets in 37.3 overs) 206
Did not bat: Bashir, Rahim, Ashraf, Rafique, Razzak, Rasel, Baishya.
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-72.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Mukuddem	10	1	37	0
Tucker	4.3	0	20	1
Pitcher	2.3	0	25	0
Leverock	10	0	62	0
Hurdle	5	0	21	1
Borden	5.3	0	41	0

Result: Bangladesh won by eight wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Shahriar Nafees.

Toss: Bermuda.
Umpires: R. Koertzen, R. Dill.
Match Referee: Clive Lloyd.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Sports Adviser to the caretaker government Tapan Chowdhury (3rd from R) inaugurates the Grameenphone Junior Davis Cup and Junior Fed Cup Asia/Oceania Zone pre-qualifying meets at the Ramna Tennis Complex yesterday.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Prantic KC pulled off an exciting last-ball victory in the Kai-Altech First Division Cricket League yesterday when they defeated Jatrabari KC by two wickets at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium.

Chasing Jatrabari's 219 all out in 49.4 overs, the winners who needed nine runs in the ultimate over, reached 222-8 when Abdullah Al Mamun smashed the last delivery through the fence. The number six batsman made a run-a-ball 63 not out featuring two fours and three sixes. Manik Das made 58 while Prantic spinner Habibur Rahman bagged 4-49.

Mohammed Nadim top scored with 50 for Jatrabari while Sohail Hossain contributed 44.

SCHOOLS CRICKET

Javed Ahmed cracked an unbeaten 114 off 81 balls to throttle Islamia High School to a comfortable six-wicket win over St Joseph's High School in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers National School Cricket Tournament in the city.

Islamia took 29.1 overs to reach 220-4 in reply to St Joseph's 218 all out in 46.5 overs at the Dhanmondi Club ground.

There were three occasions where teams went past the 300-run barrier with St Gregory's (322-7) dumping Mohammadpur Model School by 194 runs, Jane Alam Sarker School (323-9) recording a 110-run victory against Rising Sun School and Bangladesh-Indian International School (344-9) beating KL Jubilee School by 114 runs.

In a low scoring game, Kamar Para School (110-6) defeated Combined International School (109) by four wickets.

Gaibandha correspondent adds: Shahebulah School defeated Gobindaganj School by six wickets at the local stadium. In reply to Gobindaganj's 167, the Shahebulah boys stormed to 168-4 in 24.2 overs.

SHAHEED SMRITI HOCKEY

Bangladesh Army confirmed their final berth in the Holybest Energy Bulb Shaheed Smriti Hockey tournament with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Crystal Cooperative at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

The match was locked 1-1 in the first half.

Mostafa Sharifuzzaman and Anwar Hossain scored one goal each for the winners while

Shahidullah Khokon struck for Crystal.

WOMEN'S CHESS

Sharmin Sultana Shirin consolidated her position in the 28th National Women's Chess Championship qualifiers with 3.5 points after four rounds.

Sharmin, who beat Mithila in the fourth round, has opened up a one point lead in the table with Farjana Hossain Annie, Mahmuda Haque Chowdhury Moly, Mimi Arjuman and Hamida Rahman following at second place.

Annie shared points with Moly, Mimi drew with Evana, Zakia defeated Mahfuza while Sharmin beat Madhabi in other fourth round games.

MUJIB HALL SPORTS

Russell Mia of Bengali department became champion in the annual sports of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall of the Dhaka University.

Jewel Mia of Marketing finished runner-up among 200 contestants, who competed in 15 events at the Jagannath Hall playground.

ASM Faye, VC of DU, declared the meet open while Pro-VC AFM Yusuf Haider distributed prizes among the winners.

NATIONAL TT

Ansars clinch team title

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Ansar clinched the women's team title in the Palodic 28th National Table Tennis Championships with a 3-0 victory over Jessore at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium yesterday.

On way to the final, Ansars beat Rajshahi by an identical margin in the first semifinal while Jessore managed a hard-fought 3-2 victory against Bangladesh Air Force in the second semis.

In the boys' team event, Gaibandha reached the final eliminating Mymensingh 3-1 in the first semifinal and Narail outclassed Dinajpur 3-0 in the second semis.

Simmons next Ireland coach

AFP, Dublin

Former West Indies Test player Phil Simmons will take over from South African Adrian Birrell as Ireland coach after the World Cup, the Irish Cricket Union (ICU) said Sunday.

Simmons's contract will be for a period of just over two years, up to the conclusion of the 2009 ICC Trophy, which is being held in the UAE in April of that year.

"I am very pleased to be joining the Irish Cricket Union and look forward to working with both players and administration. I'm sure I will be able to continue the progress that Irish cricket has made over the past few years," said Simmons.

The former West Indies international played in 26 Test matches and 143 One Day Internationals, and was coach of the Zimbabwe team in 2004-5.

Birrell, who has guided Ireland to their first ever appearance at the World Cup which starts next month, will step down after the Caribbean tournament.

Pakistan edge

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first set in the tiebreakers. With victory on sight at 5-2, Faruk could not capitalise on his own service as Ashiq and Nazir bounced back to win 7-5.

Faruk and Mufazzal made it 1-1 with a thrilling 7-5 win but the Pakistanis had the last laugh when they clinched the decider 6-3.

In the day's other match, Singapore blanked Jordan 3-0. Bangladesh will take on Jordan while Singapore meet Malaysia in today's matches.

Earlier in the morning, Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury inaugurated the qualifying tournament, which is sponsored by Grameenphone.

Bangladesh Tennis Federation president AHM Nasiruddin, general secretary Ansaul Haque, Grameenphone's additional general manager Galib Ahmed Ansari and media manager Moyeen Tarique were also present.

Ronaldinho

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"I don't have anything to hide. I always change shirts with the other players," Ronaldinho told reporters.

"Over the last week photos have come out insinuating I'm fat but I feel fine. I have always looked after myself and am in better shape than ever. With everything that has been said recently I was motivated to play even better."

In the first half against Bilbao, Ronaldinho was involved in the build up for the second goal, scored by Xavi, and set up returning Cameroon striker Samuel Eto'o for the third.

After the break, only the woodwork prevented Ronaldinho from adding to his 16 league goals this season.

The photos of a shirtless Ronaldinho on the front of Monday's newspapers were more flattering.

Spaletti keeps

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is sticking with misfiring skipper.

"I'm not changing him," Spalletti said.

Totti insisted he would remain calm the next time Roma are awarded a penalty.

"I'll walk to the spot feeling as confident as usual," he said.

"I've just been unlucky this season and I'll try to make up for it by scoring more goals in open play."

Totti has missed four penalties in Serie A, one in the Champions League and one in the Italian Cup.

Bookies

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"The result of the match alone cost us 250,000 pounds and the industry five times that," said Ladbrokes spokesman Robin Hutchison.

"If you factor in the betting on the competition from the start we'll be looking at 1.5 million pounds."

Ladbrokes installed Chelsea at 7/2 to retain a trophy which had until now eluded Mourinho since he joined the club in June 2004.

Smith puts past behind

AFP, Johannesburg



Graeme Smith will lead from the front in his role as South Africa's World Cup captain and aggressive opening batsman and he insists his team will not be haunted by past failures.

South Africa will be among the favourites after powerful performances in the past two seasons. It's a situation they have been in before, only to stumble at crucial moments.

Smith says the whole team atmosphere is different. "We have been together for two years and we're a confident outfit. We're not afraid of being regarded as one of the best teams," said the skipper.

Much may depend on Smith's own form. The big left-hander had a dismal tour of Australia in 2005-06 and struggled at the start of the

current season, making only one run in his first three one-day innings against India.

But he finished the India series with a hard-hit 79 and was in good form against Pakistan in South Africa's last series before the World Cup.

Smith sets out to dominate opponents, scoring at close to run a ball and using brutal power to intimidate bowlers, often charging down the pitch to play attacking shots.

He and the stylish AB de Villiers are a quick-scoring combination but they both play a high risk game. If they come off, it sets up a hard-hitting lower middle order.

The South African captain says his team, now the top-ranked side in the world, have prepared well and will go to the Caribbean with a calm confidence that they can beat any opposition if they play to their potential.

Smith, 26, took over as captain after South Africa failed to get

beyond the first round of the 2003 tournament in their own country.

He can be brash and abrasive and has been criticised for being arrogant. But he has grown into the job and has developed a strong relationship with coach Mickey Arthur.

The West Indies was the scene of one of Smith's better tours as captain when South Africa went through four Tests and five one-day internationals against their hosts without losing a match.

Smith made three centuries in successive Tests and added another in the one-day series.

He dismisses concerns that South Africa's pace-based attack lacks balance and may struggle on West Indian pitches.

But he admits that he may have to play a bowling role with his off-spinners in order to fill up a fifth bowler's ration on slow pitches.

Pollock at his peak

AFP, Johannesburg



Two years ago his long-term future was questioned; now Shaun Pollock is the world's leading one-day bowler

and a key to South Africa's hopes of success in the World Cup.

At 33, Pollock is in the best form of his life.

After he took five for 23 against Pakistan in South Africa's final international before the World Cup, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that he had achieved the third-highest bowling points ranking of all time – behind only past greats Joel Garner of the West Indies and New Zealand's Richard Hadlee.

Critics pointed to a decline in the pace of Pollock's bowling. He was no

longer used as an opening bowler in Test matches and his wicket-taking ability in one-day matches was sliding.

In the calendar years 2004 and 2005 he took only 33 wickets at 33.09 and conceded just over four runs an over.

Since then, though, he has been in supreme form. Since January 2006 he has taken 41 wickets at 17.63 and maintained a miserly economy rate of 3.06 runs an over in an era when batsmen are getting bolder and totals are mushrooming.

The key lies in hard work and self analysis.

During the 2005 off-season he worked in the gym, not previously a place of choice, to build up strength and he modified his run-up. He now uses a standing start, has taken a couple of metres off his approach to the crease and reckons that as a

result he is "stronger" at the moment of delivery.

Pollock's revival has coincided with a winning streak by South Africa, often set up by him taking wickets with the new ball and putting pressure on opponents by keeping the scoring rate low.

Pollock will be playing in his fourth World Cup and acknowledges that it will be his last. He expects good batting pitches which may encourage batsmen to try to attack him.

"Teams have different game plans against me," he said.

"Sometimes they're prepared to let the ball go and I'll be economical but don't get the wickets. Sometimes teams take me on and it gives me more opportunities to pick up wickets."

"I can't really worry about their game plans. I've just got to make sure I'm up for it and hit the right areas. If they come at me I have to be calm under pressure."

Aussies target stars

AFP, Sydney



Australia will gear their World Cup training sessions towards targeting star rival batsmen, coach John Buchanan said Monday, as

alarming statistics reveal their bowling woes.

Australia head to the World Cup in the Caribbean this week with figures showing that since the start of last year their bowlers have performed the second-worst of all the major cricket nations in the crucial last 10 overs of one-day internationals, conceding an average of 6.64 runs per over in this period.

The Daily Telegraph said Australia have no one in the top 10 of bowlers who bowl at the end of games, a list headed by subcontinental spinners Muttiah Muralidaran

(Sri Lanka) and Harbhajan Singh (India), who have done exceptionally well given they play most of their matches on small, fast grounds.

It said Australia have three of the six worst-performing bowlers in this situation, with Stuart Clark, Nathan Bracken and Brett Lee (out injured) all copping severe treatment from batsmen.

"These are not the returns of a side poised to win the World Cup, so Australia must improve immediately if they are to defend their title," the newspapers said Monday.

Buchanan said he wants Australia to plan more specifically for rival teams in the World Cup, with training sessions likely to include working on balls the team feels will maximise their chances of containing or dismissing star batsmen.

"It is a matter of making sure we do all the homework and do specific training to the team we are about to play," Buchanan told The Daily Telegraph.

"That is a major area for us to concentrate on. If you are getting belted around the park all the time you have lost confidence."

"It comes back to being very clear on our opposition and having the ability to execute what we have to do."

"You have to know your rivals and train that way. We just have to make sure that area is improved in the World Cup."

Buchanan said he is adamant his bowlers can recover from the three demoralising Chappell-Hadlee Trophy series losses to New Zealand earlier this month but could not deny his side's confidence had been jolted.

"There is a bit of ego battered more than anything else. At the moment it highlights our defence. It is something we have to get right."

"If our scores are not high enough we just can't defend them."



PHOTO: AFP

Australian cricket captain Ricky Ponting (C) pacemen Nathan Bracken (L) and Stuart Clark, wearing the new uniform for the World Cup, pose in front of an Emirates airbus at the Sydney International Airport on Sunday.

30 banned from WC

AFP, Kingston



Around 30 people so far have been denied entry to the Caribbean with two weeks to go before the official opening ceremony of the World Cup.

Peter Phillips, Jamaica's national security minister, who is leading the Caribbean community's security programme for the cricket showpiece, said the measures were taken by Caribbean immigration officials using technology provided by Interpol.

The international criminal police organisation is providing the region with technology that allows law enforcement officers at airports

and seaports to instantly check passports against the group's global database of stolen and lost travel documents.

The database contains information on more than 13 million documents from over 120 countries.

Ronald Noble, Secretary General of the Paris-based Interpol, acknowledged that the region's use of the technology is a major boost in the drive to ensure that the March-April tournament passes off safely.

"We have done something that is historic and extraordinary as we put the most advanced border control system in place in the Caribbean region than anywhere else in the world," said Noble.

"To give you an idea of how powerful this system is -- each

month here in the Caribbean 96,000 passport travel documents and visas are screened against Interpol's data base instantly."

At the same time, John Collymore, head of World Cup security operations has boasted of an "impregnable" security system in place for the event.

"You never know what will happen, but our planning has attempted to move seamlessly," he said.

"The venue security is supported by the national security and the national security is supported by the regional security and the regional security is supported by the international security, so we have four layers that anyone who wants to do anything will have to penetrate."