

## 'Picking me would be stupid'

BBC ONLINE, undated

Darren Gough, England's leading one-day wicket-taker, accepts his international career has probably come to an end.

"If I don't play in the World Cup, which I'm not at this moment in time unless something silly happens, I'm not going to play," he told Sportswear.

"There's no need for me to retire because they're not going to pick me again after the World Cup full stop."

"Realistically, if they pick me again after this World Cup, I think it would be stupid anyway."

Gough said he was as enthusiastic as ever about the game but insisted he was not angry he was not going to the West Indies for the World Cup.

"I'm not bitter at all. It's definitely a huge disappointment but I'm over it," he said.

"There's been a lack of communication this winter with myself and whoever it may be, whether it be Duncan Fletcher and David Graveney, but I wish the lads well."

"I want England to win the World Cup. I'm an England supporter in all sports."

England go into the tournament on the back of winning the CB Series in Australia and Gough believes they can have a successful campaign.

"There are a lot of ifs and buts in there but we've got some good players."

"Our batting line-up is one of the best three in the world."

"We bat all the way down to [Paul] Nixon coming in at eight, who's enthusiastic. He can be useful down that order."

"The bowlers are all inexperienced but there are some very good bowlers."

"They all bowl at a good pace and if they get it right on the day they will bowl out teams."

"England could upset quite a few teams and you never know, we could sneak into the semi-finals."

Gough has just agreed to move back to Yorkshire from Essex and he is relishing the chance to captain the county where he started his career.

"Yorkshire kept chasing me and everywhere I seemed to go in the world I bumped into Geoffrey Boycott and he kept pestering me - I couldn't turn it down in the end," he said.

## An open tourney: Moody

AFP, Bridgetown

Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody believes the 2007 World Cup will be the most open yet.

"This World Cup is really open. I know that's kind of a cliché that has been thrown around for a while now, but actually it's quite true," said Moody, who was in the winning Australian team under Steve Waugh in 1999.

"I believe Sri Lanka has as good a chance as any other team to win this World Cup. We just have to knock down and take our chances and prove our worth. We have to adjust to the conditions here as quick as possible and bring our 'A' game every time we play."

Sri Lanka play two warm-up matches here against Scotland and New Zealand on March 5 and 9 before heading to Trinidad for their first round matches against India, Bangladesh and Bermuda.

"Moody's team is the best in the world and I hope they will also lead to the emergence of new stars."

"In situations like these some players tend to come to the fore in a big way and I expect a few guys to announce themselves during the upcoming weeks," the 41-year-old said.

"We have prepared very well for this World Cup and we have a strong group of 15 players with us and they are confident that they can deliver over the next seven weeks."

Sri Lanka are chasing their second World Cup having won the title in 1996.



Former foreign secretary Farooq Sobhan (L) and his partner Shamsuzzaman Kamal pose with the Khondkar Fazle Sobhan Trophy after clinching the Bangladesh National Pairs Bridge Championship at a local hotel on Saturday.

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

### SPORTS REPORTER

Under-15 Football Championship 2007 begins Monday at the Banani Army Stadium.

Eight zonal champions - Dhaka, Chuadanga, Natore, Khulna, Chittagong, Kishoreganj, Sirajganj DSAs and BKSP - will compete in the final phase to be held on round robin league system.

Two matches will be held everyday, the first from 2 pm and the 2nd from 4 pm.

The final match of the competition will be held on March 14.

### MANIKGANJ SCHOOL CRICKET

Sohel and Mamun starred as Kucherchar Ismail Hossain High School defeat Motto High School by five wickets in the school cricket tournament at the Manikganj Government High School playground yesterday.

Batting first, Motto were skittled out for 88 runs to which Kucherchar replied with 89 in only 8.2 overs, losing five wickets.

### GAIBANDHA SCHOOL CRICKET

Gaibandha Government High School beat Shahebullah Sarkar High School by three wickets in the school cricket tournament at the local stadium yesterday.

Gobindaganj take on Harisinga High School in today's match.

### BFF'S NOBLE GESTURE

Bangladesh Football Federation offered a cheque worth Tk 50,000 yesterday to the bereaved family of young footballer Omar Sharif who died while playing in the JFA Cup football competition.

Barisal Sports Association also donated the same amount of money to the family of the deceased. Sharif played the tournament for Barisal division.

### JAHURUL HAQ HALL SPORTS

Accounting student Mohammad Majedur Rahman and Islamic History student Abdullah Sadi were crowned joint champions in the annual sports meet of Jahurul Haq Hall of Dhaka University at the Jagannath Hall ground yesterday.

### MUNSHIGANJ SPORTS

The annual sports competition of Sir JC Bose Institution ended yesterday at its premises.

A cultural programme and a

prize-giving ceremony, which was attended by joint secretary of Ministry of Education Nazrul Islam Khan and Deputy Commissioner of Munshiganj Moniruddin, followed the two-day long competition.

### NAZRUL SHIKKHALOY SPORTS

The prize-giving ceremony of the annual sports competition of Nazrul Shikhaloy was held at the BIAM auditorium yesterday.

Justice Habibur Rahman Khan spoke on the occasion as chief guest.

### COLLEGE HANDBALL

Dhaka Estate College crushed BAF Shaheen College 12-5 in the Exim Bank Inter-College Handball competition at the Handball court yesterday.

In other matches, Birsreshtha Munshi Abdur Rauf Rifles College defeated Mirpur Government Bangla College 20-15 while Notre Dame College outplayed Dhaka Residential Model College 12-9.

"We are pretty close. It is the bowling area where we have got some decisions to make," he said.

England trained in intense heat on a playing field in the small village of Stubbs, with the team minibus going up an unmade road past stray goats to approach the venue.

But England coach Duncan Fletcher, who confirmed the two warm-ups would be 13 players-a-side, said they were almost sure of their best starting line-up.

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After his double century in the second Test at Adelaide, Collingwood, along with most of his England colleagues, spent too much of the recent tour residing there.

"It was horrible," he said last week, "I don't want to ever get in that kind of form again."

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The explosion-off-a-length metaphor is oft-used among professionals, but nonetheless possesses wit and candidness, natural traits in Collingwood's character. And it was not just these which meant he was the obvious choice of player - other than captain Michael Vaughan - to be 'put up' on Thursday as England's squad gathered at Gatwick Airport to depart for the World Cup. In the last three of England's four remarkable consecutive wins to capture the Commonwealth Bank Trophy he was man of the match. Scores of 106, 120 not out & 70, allied to some canny

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