

Born again Cummins

REUTERS, Gros Islet

Paceman Anderson Cummins will become only the second man to play for two teams in the World Cup if he turns out for Canada against Kenya on Wednesday.

The 40-year-old Barbadian-born fast bowler featured for the West Indies in the 1992 tournament and thought his chances of appearing in another World Cup had long gone.

But after moving to Canada in 1996, he became involved in local cricket there and worked his way on to the national team for this year's showpiece, allowing him to return to the Caribbean where he is hoping to spring some surprises.

"We recognise that playing to our potential can get us a place in the second round," he said last week.

Kepler Wessels played for Australia in the 1983 tournament before captaining his native South Africa in the 1992 event after they were readmitted to international sport following the end of apartheid.

Graeme Hick, who played for England in the 1992 edition, was in the Zimbabwe squad for the 1983 Cup but was not picked for any matches.

Cummins is also one of only five players to feature in a squad at the 1992 and 2007 World Cups. He joins illustrious company with Brian Lara, Sachin Tendulkar, Sanath Jayasuriya and Inzamamul Haq the other names.

Fast bowler Cummins played five tests for West Indies between 1993 and 1994 and amassed 63 one-day caps, the last of which came in a day/night match against Australia in Melbourne in 1995.

However, he is probably best remembered for a game he was not selected for.

In the Barbados test against South Africa in 1992, the Proteas' first back in the international arena, West Indies picked Kenny Benjamin ahead of him leading to uproar among his native Kensington Oval crowd.

Many boycotted the match and a sign reading "No Cummins, No Goings" has entered Caribbean cricket folklore.

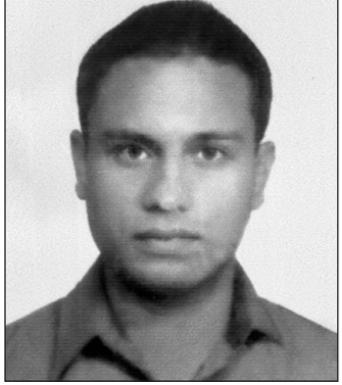
Cummins, two months from his 41st birthday, is a long way from the player he was in 1992 but he is eager to prove he deserves his place in history.

Cricket's brother missing

SPORTS REPORTER

Hafizul Haq, who came to Dhaka for treatment on his mental illness, has been missing since March 5.

A general diary (GD no.579) was recorded under Mirpur Police



HAFIZUL HAQ

Station but police has so far had no trace of Hafiz, brother of professional cricketer Mofizul Haq.

An honours degree holder of Dhaka University, 29-year-old Hafiz has been suffering from depression for a few years in his Jessore's new Upashahar home, where his family now awaits for him.

Wenger blames

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so that he could have a breather afterwards.

"Maybe not sacrificing him for the Villa game was where I made a mistake. But you play the players, and you sacrifice him in a Champions League game, so when he goes and plays for France, it's hard to take."

Arsenal will travel to Aston Villa in the Premiership on Wednesday without Henry.

But Wenger is philosophical about the situation, and insists injuries to key players is one of the pitfalls of a post-World Cup season.

He added: "I think he's both relieved to be able to rest, but frustrated at the same time. There's nothing worse for a football player when you can't perform to the best of your abilities."

"It has not been his best season and the first to concede that would be Thierry. But he has had eight exceptional seasons for us."

"I know from experience of managing in a season after a World Cup that you can lose a player completely for the whole season."



Grameenphone chief marketing officer Stein Naevald (C) speaks during a press conference at a local hotel yesterday.

D-day for St Kitts

AFP, Basseterre



St Kitts and Nevis are basking in the glory of hosting the World Cup even if it means finding themselves at the centre of a high-stakes geo-political game.

The Warner Park Stadium here, which will stage matches involving world champions Australia as well as world number one South Africa, was built with a 12 million dollar donation from Taiwan who are battling to maintain their regional influence which is slowly being eaten away by the Chinese.

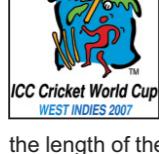
China has ploughed millions of dollars into the new stadia in Grenada and Antigua, which will stage second round matches, as well as Jamaica.

Taiwan, desperate to maintain its political alliances in the Caribbean, responded by financing the venue here as well as the warm-up facilities on St Vincent.

"On behalf of the government I thank Taiwan for their support in making this venue ready," Denzil Douglas, the prime minister of St Kitts and Nevis, told AFP.

'Tigers loss helped us'

CRICINFO, undated



Stephen Fleming said a side New Zealand's task of remaining in form for six weeks would be a challenge but the length of the World Cup meant no side would go through undefeated. Bangladesh upset New Zealand in their opening warm-up game but Fleming and Lou Vincent led the team to a good win over Sri Lanka three days later.

Fleming said following on from New Zealand's unprecedented 3-0 victory over Australia in the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy, the loss to Bangladesh served as a wake-up call. "What it does show is we can't afford to have a good week here and there -- we have to be on song for two months and that's always been a challenge for this side," Fleming told NZPA.

"You have to come down a little bit to come back and the Bangladesh loss did that," Fleming said. "If we hadn't bounced back and beat Sri Lanka, who are close to favourites, I'd be concerned, but

"we did so I'm looking forward."

Fleming said the Super Eights format would mean it was even harder for a team to win the tournament without dropping a game than in 2003. However, in that World Cup, Australia won all of their 11 matches and this year, a side would also need to win 11 to have a perfect record.

He said Australia's five straight losses leading up to the Caribbean proved there were "no clear favourites". "(The Chappell-Hadlee series) gave us the confidence that we needed," Fleming said. "We were doing a lot of things both on and off the field which were spot-on but the performances on weren't reflecting that."

New Zealand begin their World Cup campaign on Friday when they meet England in St Lucia. Peter Fulton, the batsman who broke his little finger in the warm-up game against Sri Lanka, was optimistic he could play on Friday if required.

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Sunday's 0-0 draw with Hamburg.

Benfica, who also failed to advance in the Champions League, lost 2-1 in the first leg against Paris St Germain who are facing relegation from the top flight in France after just six league wins all season.

Benfica will be without Brazilian defender Luisao after he failed to recover from a knee injury.

While Benfica look to have a good chance of surviving the tie, the same looks unlikely for Braga who travel to Tottenham Hotspur after losing the first leg 3-2 at home.

Tottenham, in a rich vein of scoring form with 20 goals in their last six matches, will be without Bulgarian striker Dimitar Berbatov who has a groin injury, but looked too strong for the Portuguese side last week and could well win their eighth successive UEFA Cup match of the season.

If they do go through to the last eight, they should be joined by English rivals Newcastle United, who beat AZ Alkmaar 4-2 at home last week.

However, after racing into a 3-0 lead inside 23 minutes, Newcastle allowed the Dutch team back into the tie by conceding two goals.

The Dutch club have never lost at home in 28 years of European competition and Newcastle look set for a nervy night before probably sealing a place in Friday's quarterfinal draw.

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Bashar said his team had been looking forward to playing competitive cricket against India and Sri Lanka and hoping to beat one of them to boost chances of qualifying for the next round.

"The team has performed well under pressure, won from tight situations from where no one gave us any hope. I'd say in our environment that word is quite a laughable word, except when you are eating spare ribs or something like that."

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NZ win boosts

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India return 'home'

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India return to their happy hunting ground hoping to solve their problems when they open their World Cup campaign against Bangladesh at the Queen's Park Oval here on Saturday.

Three of India's four wins in a triple-century in Tests, has so far scored 4,833 runs in 167 one-day internationals with seven hundreds.

India are in Group A with former champions Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and first-timers Bermuda, with the top two sides advancing to the next Super Eight stage.

They have also never been short of crowd support at this venue because of a large number of people of Indian origin.

Rahul Dravid's Indians looked

impressive in winning both of their World Cup warm-up matches against the Netherlands and the hosts, but have yet to solve their batting problems ahead of the main competition.

Virender Sehwag's form is a major

cause of concern as the hard-hitting

opener has scored just one half-

century in his last 13 one-dayers.

He also failed to regain from

in practice games, scoring 28 against the Netherlands and a duck against the West Indies.

Dravid said he was confident

Sehwag would soon return to his big-

Jayawardene praises coach

BBC ONLINE, undated

Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene has paid tribute to coach Tom Moody ahead of his side's opening World Cup match against Bermuda on Thursday.

Moody, a World Cup winner as a player with Australia in 1999, is among those linked to the England coach's job should Duncan Fletcher leave the post.

Jayawardene said: "He has brought something different to the way we play.

"He's taught us we need to improve every day, that there are no comfort zones. We're a better working unit."

Four of Sri Lanka's current squad -- Muttiah Muralidaran, Sanath Jayasuriya, Chaminda Vaas and Marvan Atapattu -- were part of the side that won the World Cup in 1996.

And Jayawardene is optimistic that the old hands can inspire his side to a repeat performance in the Caribbean.

"When we had our team meetings they were explaining to us what the feeling is like and why they want to win another World Cup," he said.

"It is amazing the way they talk about it and the pride in it. For every cricketer the World Cup is the ultimate goal."

Sri Lanka, who also face India and Bangladesh in the group stages, are also drawing inspiration from their 5-0 thrashing of England in last summer's NatWest Series.

"It was a tour that our younger guys got a lot from," said Jayawardene.

"We went there as underdogs, it was a learning experience and we came up trumps in the end.

"The players knew they could handle pressure and had the ability to perform at that level."

Smith scoffs at chokers tag

CRICINFO, undated

South Africa's tag as World Cup "chokers" continues to follow the team but Graeme Smith said they had moved on from past disappointments.

Smith said there was no hangover from the 1999 dramas that resulted in Australia eliminating South Africa in a tied semi-final.

Herschelle Gibbs' famous dropped catch that allowed Steve Waugh to go on and make a match-winning century in a Super Sixes game was followed four days later by the tie. The dramatic last-over run-out of Allan Donald, when South Africa needed only one run from three balls, knocked the team out of the World Cup.

Smith said the "choker" label given to South Africa by Waugh had become irrelevant. "The chokers tag is something we have always struggled to get rid of, which was given to us by an individual," Smith told Reuters.

"It is something this team has found quite amusing at times. A lot of those things are speculation and it (winning) comes down to the day."

"The team has performed well under pressure, won from tight situations from where no one gave us any hope. I'd say in our environment that word is quite a laughable word, except when you are eating spare ribs or something like that."

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APARTMENTS AWAIT TIGERS!

Property developers Neer have given the Tigers incentives to look forward to if they can beat India, make it to Super Eight or even become champions in the World Cup in West Indies.

According to managing director Architect Mobassher Hossain, members of Bangladesh cricket team will be awarded one apartment for beating India and one apartment if they reach the second round.

If the Tigers become world champions on April 28, each player will receive one apartment from the

developers.

FIRST DIV CRICKET

Prantik Krira Chakra beat CCS by one wicket in a crucial bottom-of-the-table clash in the Kai-Alte First Division League at the Dhaka Friends Club ground yesterday.

Zabit struck 74 to power the Dhakmondi-based school as they posted 296-9 in 50 overs. In reply, Kamarpara were bowled out for 145 runs in 34.1 overs with Zabit picking up four wickets.

Raihan took five wickets for just four runs to give Matuail Multilateral School to a six-wicket win over Willes Little Flower School at the Kalindi Cricket Ground.

In other matches, Lalmatia Housing Society School (178-3) beat Gulshan Model High School (176-10) while National Bangla High School (215-10) crushed Islami Adarsha High School (115-10) by 100 runs.

Our correspondent from Gaibandha adds: In one of the shortest finals, Kanchipara Academy crushed Mohimaganj High School by nine wickets in the school cricket competition at the local stadium yesterday.

Mohimaganj were bowled out for 53 runs in 18 overs. Kanchipara clinched the local school title as they romped home in 10 overs with nine wickets in hand.

NATIONAL YOUTH FOOTBALL

Sixty teams will take part in the Western Union National Youth Football Championship which begins on March 28.

Nine venues -- Jhenidah, Narail, Patuakhali, Shariatpur, Sherpur, Lalmonirhat, Joypurhat, Habiganj and Feni -- will host the first round matches.

Nine zonal champions will join hosts Sathkhira to play the final round matches there.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHESS

Defending champion Rani Hamid kept her lead in the Aromatic Gold 28th National Women's Chess competition

at the federation hallroom.

The international woman master beat Kishwara Shajrin in her eighth round tie as she maintained her place with eight points. Sharmin Sultana is in second place with seven points with her win against Nazrana Khan in the same round.

GP PACER HUNT

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