

Batsmen falter again

SPORTS REPORTER

While the senior team were revelling in glory after their Super Eights qualification in the World Cup, their second-string compatriots were struggling at the Colombo Cricket Club ground in Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh left-arm spinner Enamul Haque returned with figures of 6-106 by claiming all the remaining five wickets of the Sri Lanka A innings as the home team were all out for 395 after resuming the day on 296-5.

But his brilliant effort wasn't enough for the Bangladesh A batsmen to as the visitors were reduced to 201-7 before stumps were drawn on the second day being 194 runs behind Sri Lanka A.

Out-of-favour Mehrab Hossain and in form Jahanul Islam gave the visitors, who trailed the two-match series by 1-0, a bright start by starting with a 69-run opening stand. But they lost wickets at regular intervals once Jahanul returned to the pavilion for 23 off 61 balls.

Left-hander Mehrab struck team highest 51 off 83 deliveries that contained eight boundaries while Tushar Imran contributed 33-ball 31 with the help of five boundaries.

Mahmudullah Riyad and Mohammad Sharif showed some resistance during their 45-run seventh wicket stand. Sharif was out for 20 but Riyad finished the day on 37 with Mosharraf Hossain accompanying him for 1.

Earlier two overnight batsmen Kaushal Silva smashed 75 and veteran Upul Chandana added 43 as Sri Lanka added 99 runs to their overnight score.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SRI LANKA A: First innings 395 all out in 117 overs (overnight 296-5) (Gunawardene 10, Udawatte 19, Vandort 114, Kapugedera 38, Mubarak 55, Silva 75, Chandana 43, Hearn 14, Lakshitha 10 not out, Prasad 0, de Silva 0, extras 17; 1-60, Sharif 2-55, Enamul 6-106, Mehrab 1-33).

BANGLADESH A: First innings 201-7 in 57 overs (Jahanul 23, Mehrab 51, Nazimuddin 4, Tushar 31, Nadir 0, Mahmudullah 37 n.o., Sahaj 5, Sharif 20, Mosharraf 1 n.o., extras 29; de Silva 2-36, Herath 2-39, Prasad 1-24, Chandana 2-54).

Twenty20 settles Oval Test

AFP, London

Cricket officials from England and Pakistan have reached an agreement for compensation for Pakistan's forfeiture of last summer's Oval Test match.

Under the agreement, Pakistan will waive their right to a fee for a Twenty20 match as part of their tour of England in summer 2012 to settle the claim.

The Test match was delayed by umpires Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove after the Pakistan players stayed in their dressing room after the tea interval in protest at a five-run penalty for ball tampering.

The England and Wales Cricket Board estimated they lost 800,000 pounds (1.2million euros) after being forced to offer refunds to fans who had bought tickets for the fourth day of the Test, which was abandoned after tea, and for the final day.

The ECB initially set the Pakistan Cricket Board an October 31 deadline to settle the compensation row, but it has taken almost five months more to reach agreement.

As part of the revised plan, England's next tour of Pakistan in 2012 will now be postponed to January/February 2012, and will comprise of three Test matches and five one-day internationals.

Pakistan will then tour England in summer 2012, playing three more Tests and five one-day internationals in addition to the Twenty20 match which will settle the claim.

ECB chief executive David Collier commented: "The meetings with PCB demonstrated the goodwill and desire of both boards to find a cricketing solution to the issues arising from the Oval Test Match."

"Both boards were concerned that the timescale in the Future Tours Programme allocated for England's tour to Pakistan in 2010 would preclude a tour of three Test matches and five one-day internationals as scheduled."

England's tour commitments for 2010 are now significantly lighter. They will tour Bangladesh now in 2010 instead of 2012, playing two Tests and three ODIs.

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq was later cleared of ball tampering but found guilty of disrepute in relation to the post-tea no-show at the Oval and banned for four one-day matches.



PHOTO: AFP

West Indies fast bowler Daren Powell during a practice session at the Antigua Recreation Ground in St John's on Sunday.

Gary recalls good times

REUTERS, Basseterre



Wearing the years with the dignity and presence of an old blues musician, Garfield Sobers relieved the past for the benefit of an appreciative modern audience during a fleeting visit to St Kitts last week.

Unlike a musician, writer or painter the active life of an athlete is fleeting and memories are short.

Fortunately some of Sobers's greatest moments have been captured on film, he has been lavishly praised in the written word and the statistics endure for ever.

Those who know little else about Sobers or Sobers remember he hit six sixes in an over playing for Nottinghamshire back in 1968.

A younger generation were informed that only Sobers and Indian Ravi Shastri had previously managed the maximum number of sixes in an over when South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs struck Daan van Bunge over the boundary six times during a World Cup group match against the Netherlands last week.

Sobers, the greatest all-round cricketer in history and one of Wisden Almanac's five cricketers of the 20th century, was flown from Barbados to Basseterre for a ceremony in which he and Gibbs presented a sponsor's cheque for \$1 million (510,000 pounds) to charity.

"I had always learnt from listening to the older players," Sobers told a news conference. "I remembered Everton Weekes, now Sir Everton Weekes, and Lord (Learie) Constantine telling about the way they played the game of cricket and there were two versions of how to

play. "Everton would always say to keep the ball on the ground. In that way no one could catch you. Lord Constantine, on the other hand, said if you need to get quick runs, hit in the air.

"There's nobody there to stop it. But you must make sure you clear the boundary. So I took Lord Constantine's version and luckily it came off ... whenever the last ball was pitched it was going to go for six."

Constantine was a fine mentor. Although his test record is modest he was a truly great all-round cricketer who played with the concentrated passion and Caribbean flair for the unexpected Sobers was to demonstrate too with such effect.

There is no quibbling about Sobers's figures. He scored over 8,000 runs at an average only a fraction below 58 with his highest score a then test world record 365 not out.

He captured 235 wickets, starting his career as an orthodox left-arm spinner, adding wrist spin to his repertoire on the sullen Indian sub-continent pitches and lively swiving bowling elsewhere.

He also led West Indies to series victories over Australia and England in the mid-1960s.

Such skills these days would make Sobers a wealthy man. Instead, although he was the prototype of the modern international cricketer, playing year round in Australia, England, at home and on tour the monetary rewards were not there.

"In the 70s and before that, the West Indies played the game because they loved it," he said.

"There was no kind of monetary fund really involved. It was sheer love and enjoyment playing the game. When I went to England in

1957 I used to get five pounds a week.

"The beauty of it was that we were representing our country, the incentive in those days was travelling, to travel to places like Australia, New Zealand, England and Pakistan and those places that you wouldn't have seen otherwise.

"So it was quite different and one could understand the different approach today, there's a lot of responsibility and people expect so much more these days."

Sobers flourished a bat which was little more than a willow wands compared to the bludgeons wielded by Gibbs and his contemporaries. He still hit the ball ferociously hard from a high backlift.

From a short loose-limbed approach and a long sweep of the arm he bowled wickedly late inswing at a pace which could be genuinely quick.

A swift, agile outfielder as a young man he became one of the great short-leg fielders to the bowling of spinner Lance Gibbs. His bearing and distinctive rolling gait radiated confidence.

"The walk?" he said. "It wasn't just something that was put on by me over the years playing cricket. It was just a natural walk and a lot of people copied it."

Recently, International Cricket Council chief executive Malcolm Speed said the West Indies team from the 1960s to the mid-1990s were the greatest phenomenon in 20th century team sport.

"The roots of rapid run-getting are clearly in the flamboyance of the West Indies players," he said at the annual Sonny Ramadhin lecture.

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Ashraf denies match-fixing

AFP, London