

Bangladesh loss costs SA dearly

AFP, Georgetown

South Africa suffered another blow to their morale on Sunday when they lost their world number one ranking following their shock 67-run defeat to Bangladesh.

The defeat means also that Ricky Ponting's Australia will regain their place at the top of the new rankings when the official figures are released later this week.

According to the International Cricket Council (ICC) one-day international predictor, South Africa lost one point after their defeat against Bangladesh and have now moved down to 125, while Australia moved on to 127.

Even a defeat in their latest Super Eights match against England on Sunday would not displace Australia from the top as they will still go to 126.

In case they register a win over their archrivals they will strengthen their position with one more point (128), the predictor said.

South Africa topped the ICC one-day international rankings at its annual cut-off date on April 1, 2007 for the first time since the rankings were introduced five years ago.

That earned them a handsome cash award of 175,000 US dollars, while Australia pocketed 75,000 US dollars for being runner-up.

South Africa's promotion to the top spot was a reward for their good showing in one-day internationals over the past 12 months.

Their performances included a 3-2 series win over Australia on their own soil, during which they clinched the series by chasing a world-record 438-9 last year.

South Africa also reached the semifinals of the ICC Champions Trophy in India in October 2006, before winning 4-0 against India and 3-1 against Pakistan, both at home.

Barbados-leg

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Before the team left Guyana, World Cup volunteers scurried for autographs as the team waited to board a chartered flight to Barbados on Sunday. A handshaking distance away the South African players were seated. Hardly anyone approached them.

Now the push for the semifinals starts although Bangladesh would prefer to go match by match. Just outside the airport in Bridgetown, an advertisement hoarding proudly acclaimed 'Barbados, where legends are born'.

A super three days here would have the same meaning for the Bangladesh team.

The Tigers had a swimming session at the Hilton's pool and then took to the clear blue sea on Sunday, preparing for yesterday's training at the windward ground, some 40 minutes' drive from the hotel.

Powerplay

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can be in your favour to take them later in an innings and today was one of those days."

Vaughan, who failed again with the bat making just five before he was dismissed by Tait, still believes England can make the semifinals.

"Not many of us are playing that well and we are making it difficult for ourselves. We will have to win our next three games if we are to get to the semifinals," he said.

Vaughan, recognised that England wasted a golden opportunity to beat their old rivals.

"We were 164-2 and were looking at 280-290 which would have been a really competitive total. Even at 247 we were still in the game.

"We'd tried to get a few wickets and put the squeeze on them but all credit to them."

England's next match is against Bangladesh in Barbados on Wednesday while Australia, bidding for a third successive World Cup title, face Ireland, also in Barbados, on Friday.

Aussies beatable

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"(Mashrafe) Mortaza is a good opening bowler and the left-arm (Syed Rasel) at the top looks like he's quite hard to hit."

"They are a huge threat. Any team that's beaten India and South Africa in a World Cup have got to be taken seriously."

Vaughan's early exit after winning the toss meant he'd now scored just 83 runs from six tournament innings.

His form was thrown into sharper focus by Australia captain Ricky Ponting's composed 86, the skipper's third-wicket stand of 112 with Michael Clarke (55 not out) all but seeing his side home.

Vaughan was at a loss to explain his mediocre one-day international record -- he's yet to score a century in 83 matches.

"I know I'd have plenty of runs. It's as frustrating for me as it is for everyone watching. It's just not happening. That's sometimes the way batting goes."



PHOTO: AFP

An ecstatic England batsman Kevin Pietersen (L) punches the air to celebrate his century against Australia as Glenn McGrath walks during their Sunday's Cricket World Cup Super Eights match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in St John's.

Bangladesh inspire

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the semifinals, Johnston's men look for their first win in round two when they take on New Zealand here on Monday.

Ireland, making their debut in the World Cup, sent Pakistan crashing out of the World Cup with an upset three-wicket win in the group stage last month. They also tied their match against Zimbabwe to earn a place in the Super Eights.

Since then Ireland has been competitive in their two matches but lost to England by 48 runs and by seven wickets against South Africa.

When asked if Bangladesh's win put pressure on Ireland to make their presence felt, Johnston replied: "I don't think so, Bangladesh play a lot more cricket than us and have more experience."

"We would like to finish seventh rather than eighth (in the table) but for that we have to work hard. We will play Bangladesh (April 15) and will focus on what we can do," said Johnston.

Ireland meet defending champions Australia (April 13), Bangladesh

(April 15) and Sri Lanka (April 18) in their remaining matches.

Johnston said that not being able to repeat the performance which shocked Pakistan had been disappointing.

"We just want to do the best we can. It would be great if we can find the kind of performance we put in against Pakistan. We have sort of disappointed since then."

Indians befriend

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India will go on the three-week tour with an interim cricket manager in Test star-turned-commentator Ravi Shastri following coach Greg Chappell's decision not to renew his two-year contract.

Rahul Dravid will continue as captain, but India's cricket chiefs have instructed selectors to pick a "young team" in a bid to make a fresh start in world cricket.

Umpires: Mark Benson and Daryl Harper.

Both WI, SA

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semifinal in India last November when Chris Gayle hammered an unbeaten century.

South Africa have injury concerns over batsman Herschelle Gibbs, who had to leave the field because of a calf strain during the Bangladesh match, and all-rounder Andrew Hall, who was rested because of what was described as a minor thigh strain.

PROBABLE TEAMS

SOUTH AFRICA: Graeme Smith (captain), AB de Villiers, Jacques Kallis, Herschelle Gibbs or Loots Bosman, Ashwell Prince, Mark Boucher, Justin Kemp, Shaun Pollock, Andrew Hall or Makhaya Ntini, Andre Nel, Charl Langeveldt.

WEST INDIES: Brian Lara (captain), Chris Gayle, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Marlon Samuels, Dwayne Bravo, Dwayne Smith, Denesh Ramdin, Ian Bradshaw, Jerome Taylor, Daren Powell.

Umpires: Mark Benson and Daryl Harper.

Left is right!

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match with England where he made 41.

Hayden looked unstoppable as he cracked a half-century against minnows Scotland in the opening match and then smashed the fastest Cup hundred off just 66 balls against top-ranked South Africa.

His knock eclipsed Canadian John Davison's 67-ball century against the West Indies in the 2003 edition in South Africa.

The 35-year-old Hayden continued in the same vein, hammering a robust 158 against the West Indies in the opening Super Eights game to set up his team's comfortable victory.

Jayasurya remains a key to his team's fortunes even after spending more than a decade in international cricket.

The 37-year-old is credited with redefining batting in the initial overs with his consistent over-the-top hitting in the 1996 World Cup in the sub-continent.

Jayasurya has already smashed centuries against the West Indies and Bangladesh to revive memories of 1996 when he emerged one of the stars of Arjuna Ranatunga's Cup-winning squad.

The pitches may be slow and favouring fast bowlers in the early overs, but Jayasurya has been batting with freedom to demoralise the opposition with his breath-taking strokes.

He has already scored 303 in six games here with a century against the West Indies.

"I want to finish the World Cup on a high note," Jayasurya said after the West Indies match. "Although I have 25 centuries, I'll never forget this one."

Aquib suggested that Bangladesh should try and produce some quality fast bowlers and a leg-spinner if they want to win Test matches.

"You should understand that you have to be a competitive side in the longer-version cricket that's why you should emphasise in this area," he pointed out.

However, as a coach, he was saddened by the comments of

Whatmore, who expressed his desire to get the Indian job.

"He should not have said this.

reputation for nearly a decade with his audacious stroke play.

The wicketkeeper-batsman has scored 238 in his six matches here.

New Zealand captain Fleming has scored 280 in five matches with one hundred and two half-centuries at the World Cup.

Smith has been dominating the bowling right from the first match. His consistency at the top helped South Africa get off to a solid start in most of

the games.

The South African captain had made four successive half-centuries before missing out on the fifth against Ireland when he scored 41.

And when he failed against Bangladesh here on Saturday, his team continued to struggle for runs before losing the match.

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the games.

When you are in charge of a team and especially involved in a big event, a coach should put his heart and soul behind the team. I understand that everybody needs money but like doctors and teachers, coaching is also a different kind of profession where ethics is very important. Being the Bangladesh coach, he should have not expressed his desire for other jobs openly. He can negotiate it personally," he explained.

Aquib, favoured by legends Imran Khan and Wasim Akram to take the hot seat in Pakistan, said that time has come for him to take over the Pakistan national team as he has the experience of working with most of the boys in the current squad.

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