

Still a long way to go: Dav

AFP, Bridgetown



Bangladesh coach Dav Whatmore, who has masterminded memorable Caribbean World Cup wins over India and South Africa, is adamant that there is still plenty of work to do to fine-tune the Asian Tigers.

The burly Australian is used to upsetting the world order of international cricket -- in 1996, he coached Sri Lanka to the World Cup title.

"We can't just sit back and say, 'that's it, we have answered our critics and that's the end of the story.' Far from it," said Whatmore.

"We have still got a long way to go yet and the reality is that Bangladesh are still the number nine side in the world and, as sometimes happens, we put in a shocking performance and we get beaten heavily."

"When that happens, it leads to more comments (from the critics)."

"We know that within ourselves we have improved and that we are capable of causing upset wins and we would like that to continue."

Bangladesh's win over India in the first round helped dump Rahul Dravid's side out of the tournament while Saturday's 67-run win over South Africa in Guyana threw the race for the semifinals wide open.

If Bangladesh were to beat England here on Wednesday, they would become outside contenders for a last four place themselves.

"The win against South Africa gave us a lift but we are not getting carried away," said Whatmore.

"Everyone who saw the game in

West Indies tried everything. Pace, spin, their entire 15-man squad and even a mid-tournament holiday all proved in vain.

And in a final, desperate attempt to save their doomed World Cup dream, even religion couldn't save them, not even in the daunting shape of former feared fast bowler-turned-preacher Wes Hall.

Hall, now an evangelist minister, had tried to rally support in the

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Lara quits ODIs

AFP, St George's



West Indies captain Brian Lara will retire from the one-day game in the wake of his side's miserable World Cup campaign.

The 37-year-old record-breaking batsman confirmed that his last two games will be the Super Eights clashes against Bangladesh and England in Barbados on April 19 and April 21.

His decision came in the wake of his team's 67-run defeat to South Africa on Tuesday which left the hosts with virtually no chance of reaching the semifinals.

"I think this is the end of my one-day career, for sure," said Lara.

"I honestly feel that my game is over and we should give it to one of the younger players. It's really tough playing one-day internationals out there when you are 37-38 years old."

"After the World Cup the next one-day tournament for the West Indies is in England and I'd love to sit back and watch and see the team do well."

"I want to leave a team that play better. And that is still my hope. These might be my last two one-day internationals but I still want to see the team moving out of this competition learning something from it and

that's all I can hope for."

"It's demoralising yes but I want to see certain things happen and I want to see the team move on."

West Indies crashed to their fourth successive Super Eights loss which left them on two points and needing a miracle series of results to allow them to creep into the semifinals.

Lara, in his third term as skipper, has been under fire throughout the tournament with a host of former players and pundits calling for him to stand down as captain.

He has played 297 ODIs and scored 10,354 runs at 40.60 with 19 hundreds and 63 half-centuries.

After four successive defeats in the Super Eights, Lara felt compelled to apologise to the Caribbean fans.

"We are all disappointed and we are very sorry for the way we have performed in this World Cup," said Lara.

"All we can say is that we are sorry to our people."

"There will be no semifinal place for us but we have to play with pride and character in the next two games. It's a chance to show we can perform with pride and character."

West Indies qualified for the Super Eights with three wins in three matches in the first round which included a victory against Pakistan.

"We beat Pakistan with disciplined bowling and fielding," said Lara.

"We weren't as convincing as maybe we should have been. But we are ranked eighth in the world so we were the underdogs. However, we expected to do better than we did."

South Africa captain Graeme Smith, whose side piled up 356 after being put into bat by West Indies, paid tribute to Lara.

"It's sad to see him go," said Smith.

"He's been an unbelievable performer for the West Indies and has got them out of trouble plenty of times."

"He has been a great servant to the team and I hope the West Indies give him a great send off in the last two matches."

FACTFILE

Full name: Brian Charles Lara

Born: May 2, 1969, Cantaro, Santa Cruz, Trinidad

Age: 37

Major teams: West Indies, ICC World XI, Northern Transvaal, Trinidad Tobago, Warwickshire

Batting style: Left-hand bat

Bowling style: Legbreak googly

ONE-DAY CAREER

Batting

Matches: 297

Innings: 287

Not out: 32

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PHOTO: AFP

A FUTILE END: West Indies captain Brian Lara drags the ball onto the stumps off South Africa all-rounder Jacques Kallis (not in picture) during the World Cup Super Eights match at the Grenada National Stadium in St George's on Tuesday.

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PHOTO: AFP

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Afro-Asia Cup in Bangalore & Chennai

PTI, New Delhi

Bangalore and Chennai will host the second edition of the Afro-Asia Cup cricket tournament featuring three day-night one-day internationals in June.

The 100,000-dollar prize money event will kick-off with the first match at Bangalore on June 6, followed by the remaining two matches in Chennai on June 9 and 10.

Former Test opener Chetan Chauhan is the Indian representative in the four-member selection panel to pick the Asian side that will comprise also players from Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Majid Khan (Pakistan), Lalith Kaluparana (Sri Lanka) and ASM Faruque (Bangladesh) are the other three selectors who will meet in Dhaka on May 11 to choose the Asian team.

The African squad will feature players from South Africa, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

"It's the first major collaboration on any sporting level between the two continents and I'm sure, it will come to be seen as a truly significant event in the world of cricket," Sharad Pawar, president of the Board of Control for Cricket in India president and chairman of the Afro-Asian Cricket Corporation, said at a press conference.

SRI LANKA V NEW ZEALAND

Fleming's self test

AFP, St George's



New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming believes his side can win the World Cup: their Super Eights match against fellow contenders Sri Lanka here on Thursday will go a long way to seeing if he is right.

The Black Caps -- like defending champions Australia -- are unbeaten at the tournament so far -- top the Super Eights table on run-rate.

But unlike Australia, who've beaten South Africa, and are chasing an unprecedented third straight title, they've yet to come up against a leading one-day international side at this event although they did defeat England by six wickets in their opening group match.

One more victory will see New Zealand, yet to win the World Cup, into the last four.

Thursday's match marks the start of a run of games that sees them up against 1996 champions Sri Lanka, South Africa and Australia in the space of 10 days in Grenada.

"We know we are capable of

winning it," said Fleming.

But all-rounder Jacob Oram added: "These three games will either build on our confidence or chip away at it."

New Zealand are now just one short of equaling their 10-match winning run of 2004, having already beaten Australia three times at home before coming to the Caribbean.

However, Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene on the other hand have yet to be tested at this tournament.

"They are playing some really good cricket but they haven't played one of the top teams yet," he told AFP.

Hosts New Zealand, third in the International Cricket Council (ICC) one-day ratings, and fourth-placed Sri Lanka squared a five-match series 2-2 in January after the final game was washed out.

But the balance of Thursday's match could swing New Zealand's way before a ball is bowled after Lasith Malinga was ruled out.

Sri Lanka's fast bowler ace missed practice Tuesday after sustaining ligament damage in his left ankle during an earlier training session.

Malinga, whose round-arm

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Total meetings	65
Sri Lanka win	28
New Zealand win	34
Tied	1
No Result	2



TODAY'S MATCH

Team	Time	Venue
Sri Lanka v New Zealand	7:30 pm	Grenada

Ad