



Tigers focus on batting

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful hoped that their extended batting sessions during last week would help them succeed in Sri Lanka.

Talking to reporters after their final practice session in preparation for the tour of Sri Lanka at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, Ashraful sounded confident that the weeklong net sessions, indoors and outdoors at the centre wicket, would come in more than handy.

"Every member in this team has worked on their batting. We are starting with Test matches and I think that if we can succeed with the bat, we can go a long way in this tour," said the 23-year-old Ashraful.

"We have worked very hard over

the last week and from my experience, I can tell you that the team look confident going into this tough series."

Ashraful emphasised on their batting strategy during this camp since the last Tigers tour to the island only saw two half-centuries in Tests and only one in the shorter version.

He said: "We worked on ball selection -- which to leave and which to play. I think the amount of time we have given in the middle or at indoors will be valuable once we get going in the Test matches. Wherever we have practised, we have put more importance on our batting."

Interim coach Shaun Williams, who took over reigns from countryman Dan Whitemore, thanked the curators for preparing the wickets under difficult weather.

"We are fortunate to have had such good practice sessions given

the conditions. Tribute must go to the curators for giving us everything we needed. I think we haven't missed a single session during this camp, and it is remarkable in this weather," said Williams.

It is a far cry from the preparatory camp for the 2005 tour to Sri Lanka during the monsoon. Then the Tigers went almost unprepared after a long tour from England, where they also encountered different conditions.

Ashraful commented that the current crop of players looked more confident than the last tour party that went south. Back in 2005, then captain Habibul Bashar termed it the 'worst tour ever' after Bangladesh were whitewashed in both forms.

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Course not on right course

Cricket

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Putting a system in place could be harder if the right atmosphere can't be created because of lack of logistic support.

Cricket Australia has sent four coaches as part of their deal with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) to educate local coaches through the Level Two Coaching Course but it seemed that their presence is forcing an adjustment for the rest.

With the Bangladesh team practising at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur, the coaches were not given the sur-

roundings for neither learning nor teaching. They were given makeshift spaces to cramp in their programme. That was seemingly tough on the foreign experts.

Led by CA's international development programme manager Ross Turner, the crew from Australia are trying their best to give Bangladesh a coaching structure the country badly needs.

Former Australian fast bowler turned coach Andrew Zesers, Ashleigh "Toot" Byron and Graham House are here to instruct the local coaches along with Turner.

"We are here to help layout the strategy and structure for the courses, resources that will help create the coaching system that will

become self-styled at some point," said Turner.

The target for this course is to create Masters, or for that matter Mentors, who can then in turn educate the Level Two coaches."

There is a strong correlation between coaching and playing but at the same time Turner mentioned that it is quite different as well. It actually depends on where you come from.

He however stressed on the fact that there are more cricketers in Bangladesh than say, in Australia and that creates the big problem: few coaches, more players.

In Australia, there are 500,000

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Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (R) speaks as interim coach Shaun Williams looks on during a press conference at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Onus on West Indies

Final Test starts at Chester-le-Street today

Cricket

AFP, Durham

West Indies hope fast bowler Fidel Edwards can carry on from where he left off at Old Trafford as they look to restore some pride in the final Test against England.

Although, 2-0 down in the four-match contest, West Indies will be aiming to build on their improved showing in a 60-run third Test defeat when the series finale starts at Riverside here on Friday.

Old Trafford saw the return to Test cricket of Edwards, whose extra pace gave West Indies a physical threat they'd otherwise lacked so far this series. Often erratic, Edwards has an indifferent record of 67 wickets in 26 Tests at an expensive average of nearly 44 apiece.

But the 25-year-old Barbados round-arm paceman bowled better in Manchester than match figures of four for 148 in 32.1 overs would suggest.

"The timing was right for Fidel in that Test match," David Moore, the West Indies coach explained on Wednesday.

"He came in and bowled on a wicket that was hard and had a lot of bounce. He'd been short of top-quality cricket, so he needed some time to find his feet," added Moore.

However, the Australian stressed Edwards's pace was part of an overall bowling strategy.

"If Fidel is making them jump around a bit, we need someone down the other end to be putting pressure on as well. Corey Collymore is very much an unsung player for us. He's our top wicket-taker, he just keeps chipping away with a very good economy rate."

At Old Trafford, medium-pacer Darren Sammy's second innings figures of seven for 66 were the second-best by a West Indian on Test debut.

However, the 23-year-old all-rounder sustained a groin injury while batting on the last day and is now doubtful for the series climax.

West Indies' batting was bolstered last time out by a defiant second innings 116 not out from Shivnarine Chanderpaul - their first century of the series - who'd missed the record innings and 283 run defeat in the second Test at Headingley with a knee injury.

Moore said other players needed

to follow Chanderpaul's lead if West Indies were to achieve what is only a third win in 39 Tests. "We've got players who are getting good starts and not going on, from getting 40 or 50 to 80 or 100."

Stand-in skipper Daren Ganga, leading the side after Ramaresh Sarwan's tour-ending shoulder injury at Headingley, would relish a fifty after being lbw for five and nought to revived fast bowler Stephen Harmison at Old Trafford.

"Daren's an excellent tactician and excellent captain," said Moore.

"Unfortunately we haven't seen the best of his batting yet, but over the last six to eight months he's been averaging 40-plus, so I'm hoping his batting will come good for us."

England are set to recall swing bowler Matthew Hoggard, who has missed the last two Tests with a groin injury, in place of the wayward Liam Plunkett.

Hoggard's return should ease the burden on left-arm spinner Monty Panesar who has led England's attack this series with 17 wickets at under 21 apiece, including 10 for 187 at Old Trafford.

At times in that match, England

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B. League back today

SPORTS REPORTER

The B. League will resume today in the city after an impromptu four-day break due to heavy monsoon rain.

Mid-table Arambagh and Farashganj, scheduled to play on June 10 before the 14th week of the inaugural professional league was interrupted by persistent inclement weather, meet in the Dhaka derby at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Farashganj, who lost the first-leg match 2-0, have a chance to overtake their city rivals in the table if they win. A second win in the season against the riversiders, however, will bring Arambagh to fourth place.

All eyes, meanwhile, would be on tomorrow's much talked about clash between Abahani and Mohammad, the two local giants gearing up for the pole position.

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POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Mohammedan	12	6	4	2	23	8	22
Muktijodha	12	6	4	2	19	9	22
Abahani	11	6	4	1	12	4	22
Rusel	12	5	5	2	12	5	20
Brothers	12	5	4	3	21	11	19
Ctg MSC	12	5	2	5	10	17	17
Arambagh	12	5	1	6	13	12	16
Farashganj	12	3	5	4	11	14	14
Khulna Abahani	13	3	2	8	13	27	11
Ctg Abahani	12	3	1	8	8	23	10
Rahmatganj	12	2	2	8	8	27	8

Sun TV to cover Ireland series

PTI, Mumbai

Kalanidhi Maran-promoted media group Sun TV Network Ltd yesterday said it will broadcast live feed of ODI series between India, Pakistan, South Africa and Ireland in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada languages.

The group has signed an exclusive cable and satellite channels agreement with Nimbus - the holder of broadcast rights - for live feed of the series, to be played from June 23 to July 3. Sun TV told the Bombay Stock Exchange.

"This is a long-term agreement with Nimbus with respect to any cricket series over cricket seasons 2007-2008 to 2009-2010 in the languages of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam for which Nimbus has the rights," Sun TV added.

On Sun News the feed would be telecast with Tamil commentary, on Gemini News it would be with Telugu commentary and on Udaya Varthegalu the commentary would be in Kannada.

Sun TV, however, did not give any financial details of the deal.

After the announcement of the agreement, shares of Sun TV jumped 6.84 per cent and closed at Rs 1,457.05 on the BSE.

Ad



STAR Sports

England v West Indies

Fourth Test, Day One

Live from 3:58 pm

ESPN

Sportscenter India

Sports News

Live at 8:30 pm



DAY'S EVENT

B. League

Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Time: 4:30 pm

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