



Did U Know?

There are more than 200 ball boys and ball girls used to fetch tennis balls during Wimbledon. To become a ball boy or ball girl, you are required to train eight hours a week for four months before the start of the tournament.



Andy Roddick
(American tennis superstar)
"This was by far the toughest match I've ever played here and I feel pretty lucky to be standing in the winners circle. Hopefully I can carry that over to Wimbledon."
After winning the Queen's Club title in London on Sunday.

What to WATCH

NEO Sports
Ireland v South Africa
One-day international
Live from 3:45 pm

'Match referee to be blamed'

PTI, Karachi

Holding the match referee solely responsible for the farcical end to the 2007 World Cup final, a Pakistan Cricket Board official on Saturday said the ICC should not have punished the entire team of match officials for the mistakes committed during the summit clash.

All five officials -- on-field umpires Aleem Dar and Steve Bucknor, TV umpire Rudi Koertzen, reserve umpire Billy Bowden and match referee Jeff Crowe -- were not considered for the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa.

A surreal finish due to a failure to apply standard playing conditions overshadowed Australia's victory over Sri Lanka in the rain-marred final in Barbados on April 28.

"Why should the on field umpires or even the other umpires be held responsible for something which is entirely the responsibility of the match referee," a PCB official told PTI on condition of anonymity.

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LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

The AB Bank Metropolis Women's Table Tennis League will commence today at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium. Nine teams will take part in the league. They are defending champions Abahani, Biman, Lalbagh TTA, Youngs Club, Moler TTC, Armenian Girls and Bangladesh Chemical and Perfumery Society.

Meanwhile, the men's senior division super league will start from Tuesday.

TT CAMP

A youth table tennis coaching camp began yesterday at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium under the auspices of the Bangladesh Table Tennis Federation. A total of 16 paddlers (16-20 years) will take part in the three-week camp to be conducted by local coaches Hafizur Rahman and Ripon Khan. Secretary for Youth and Sports Dr Golam Mostafa Talukder declared the camp open.

DIVISIONAL KARATE

Sunamganj and Moulavibazar won two gold medals each in the Sylhet leg of the Samsung 2nd Divisional Karate competition in Sylhet. Faizul Islam and Hossain Ahmed won in the men's singles and the

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Slight worry over Mashrafe

SPORTS REPORTER from Colombo

The Bangladesh team is in good shape with the exception of vice-captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who was complaining about his recurring back pain.

The 23-year-old paceman bowled in the nets yesterday but felt uncomfortable with his troubled back since arriving in Sri Lanka on June 17.

"I feel the pain a little bit in my back and also in the abdomen but I bowled today in the net. I am hopeful that I will be okay before the match," said Mashrafe.

The leading Bangladesh paceman was also worried about the fact that he had to fly home without playing any match when the Tigers last toured Sri Lanka in 2005.

Selector Akram Khan, who is travelling with the team, however informed that there was nothing serious about his injury.

"Yes, he has complained about back pain, but it's not that serious. I believe he will be okay before the first Test," said the former Bangladesh skipper.

Bangladesh launch their first away series after a successful World Cup with the first Test starting on Monday.

Like Akram, the other team members were also unconcerned about his backache, which Mashrafe had successfully endured during the World Cup in the West Indies and in the home series against India last month.

The Tigers trained indoors at the Colombo Cricket Club ground, where their only three-day practice match was tapered to a rain-ruled draw.



Abahani's hatrick-boy Emily (L) races past Rahmatganj captain Jahangir during their B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

ICC ban top umpires



AFP, London

All five officials involved in the bungled end to the World Cup final will not feature in September's inaugural World Twenty20 tournament in South Africa, the International Cricket Council announced Friday.

Australia's victory against Sri Lanka in the showcase match in Barbados on April 28 was overshadowed by a farcical climax brought about by a failure to apply a standard playing condition.

Match referee Jeff Crowe, experienced on-field umpires Steve Bucknor and Aleem Dar and two more senior figures in third umpire Rudi Koertzen and reserve official Billy Bowden incorrectly ruled, after a stoppage for bad light, the game had to continue even though the required minimum of 20 overs in the second innings had by then already been bowled.

Australia captain Ricky Ponting, whose side were in a commanding position, and Sri Lanka counterpart Mahela Jayawardene both knew the match had ended.

But the officials insisted Sri Lanka bat out the final three overs of the game in ridiculous conditions because of a baseless fear that, if they didn't, Sunday's reserve day would be required.

Following an investigation by ICC cricket manager David Richardson, the former South Africa wicketkeeper, the global governing body has taken what it said was "proportionate" action against all five officials.

"It would have been easy to let sleeping dogs lie and pretend nothing happened," said ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed in a statement issued from its Dubai headquarters.

"But the reality is that the playing control team (the match referee and the four umpires) made a serious and fundamental error that caused the final of our flagship event to end in disarray and confusion," the Australian added.

"That was not acceptable for such experienced and talented officials and although we do not like to have to take such action, we felt it was necessary to decline to appoint them for our next event, the ICC World Twenty20 in South Africa.

"We feel that to stand them down for this two-week tournament

is a proportionate measure."

Former New Zealand captain Crowe said: "While it is never easy to take criticism, I think it is right that there are consequences for our actions as match officials. In this instance I understand that the ICC could not merely let it go.

"We set ourselves high standards as match officials and at the end of that day we did not reach those standards. It was not a pleasant experience for us but hopefully now we can look forward and learn from it."

Australia won the final by 53 runs under the Duckworth-Lewis method and so became the first side to win three successive World Cups and four in all.

The ICC said it would announce officials for the World Twenty20 in due course. The tournament, involving the ICC's ten full members, as well as Kenya and Scotland, is scheduled to take place in South Africa from September 11-24.

Chawla troubles Ireland



PHOTO: INTERNET

Niall O'Brien, who held the Ireland innings together with a brilliant 52, plays one with soft hands during the one-day international against India at the Civil Service Cricket Club at Stormont in Belfast yesterday.



AFP, Belfast

Teenage leg-spinner Piyush Chawla took three for 29 as India bowled out Ireland for 193 in the one-day international at Stormont here Saturday in the opening match of their United Kingdom tour.

Chawla's figures, in his second match at this level, topped the three for 37 he took on debut against Bangladesh in Dhaka in May.

Ireland were indebted to wicket-keeper Niall O'Brien's 52 and his stand of 48 with skipper Trent Johnston (34) that revived the innings after the hosts had slumped to 121 for six.

Ireland, who produced the shock result of the World Cup when beating Pakistan by three wickets and advancing into the second round -- something India were unable to do after defeats by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka -- were sent into bat by India captain Rahul Dravid.

Ireland, with just six survivors from their team in the Caribbean, lost a wicket in the fifth over when Shantakumaran Sreesanth induced an edged drive from a flat-footed Kenny Carroll and wicket-keeper Dinesh Karthik, playing in place of Mahendra Singh Dhoni, held a diving catch.

Sreesanth with his fifth ball back after an opening spell of one for 14

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4-star Emily takes Abahani to top



SPORTS REPORTER

Four-goal Zahid Hasan Emily inspired Abahani to brush aside a hapless Rahmatganj 7-0 yesterday to equal Mohammedan's record of the biggest victory in the B. League set in the last week against Chittagong Mohammedan.

All of Emily's four goals came in the second half after Abahani had taken a 3-0 lead at the break through Cameroonian striker Nchouvat Souleyman's opener and a brace from Abul Hossain.

The sky-blues, whose previous best in the competition was a 3-1 win against fellow capital side Farashganj, finally put behind the goal drought with their seventh win.

The Dhanmondi outfit, having scored only a dozen goals in as many outings, also climbed to the top along side Mohammedan, Muktiyoddha and Sheikh Russel. Level with the trio on 26 points, Abahani however, have the edge of playing one match less than the three title aspirants.

Even the inclusion of four foreigners did not change things for the league's whipping boys and bottom-table Rahmatganj, who have now conceded four hatricks out of total six in the competition.

The old-Dhaka club, who were

humiliated 7-1 by Mohammedan in the first leg, showed signs of recovery with two wins at the start of the second leg but went down to Muktiyoddha 3-1 in the last match before opening the floodgate to Abahani.

On a rain-soaked and uneven pitch at the Bangabandhu National Stadium, it was Rahmatganj who drew early blood in the first leg, then mounted heavy pressure. It told in the 21st minute after rightback Siraji had forced a fine save by Anwarul at the rival goal.

Souleyman, playing his second match in Dhaka, showed a superb piece of skill to control the ball on the edge of the area and exchanged a pass with Abul before drilling a low drive through the diving keeper into

POINTS TABLE

Teams	M	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Mohammedan	14	7	5	2	30	8	26
Abahani	13	7	5	1	19	4	26
Muktiyoddha	14	7	5	2	23	11	26
Russel	14	7	5	2	17	8	26
Brothers	13	6	4	3	24	11	22
Ctg MSC	13	5	2	6	10	17	17
Farashganj	14	4	5	5	12	15	17
Arambagh	14	5	1	8	13	16	16
Khulna Abahani	13	3	2	8	13	27	11
Ctg Abahani	14	3	2	9	12	28	11
Rahmatganj	14	2	2	10	9	37	8

the back of the net.

Anwarul then denied the Cameroonian a shot at the near post after Emily's low cross and spectacularly palmed out leftback Wali's curling centre out of his goal.

Abahani doubled the lead from the resulting corner in the 37th minute when Abul leaped high in the air to nod the ball home off opposition midfielder Felix's head.

Two minutes later, national midfielder Abul, who had scored only twice previously, tapped the ball in from close after Emily's effort came off the goalkeeper following a low cross by Wali.

A light drizzle began on the hour and Rahmatganj, who made twin changes at the break, had a chance to reduce the arrears but Felix's header on a corner by captain Jahangir missed the mark in the 67th minute.

Emily, who was not in the starting line-up in the last two matches, took just eight minutes to complete his hatrick after getting his first goal in the 71st minute with a dazzling solo.

The young national striker, also going through a lean patch, dribbled past four rival defenders to get inside the box and put the ball into the roof of the net for his third league goal.

He beat Anwarul at his near post five minutes later with a powerful header on an exquisite left-side freekick by substitute Abdullah Parvez to make it 5-0.

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'Increase pace of development'



BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

If one considers the inclement weather conditions over the past few days in Colombo, there is a reasonable amount of doubt about the fate of the first Test of the three-

match series between visiting Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. It is a common feature in this season in the island nation that you experience a sudden downpour during any time of the day -- like on Saturday afternoon.

The home team was all set for a knock outside the indoor nets last afternoon adjacent to the Sinhalese



KUMAR SANGAKKARA

Sports Club (SSC) ground but rain started to fall heavily and forced them into the inside nets.

The Sri Lankan's though were hardly bothered with the rain interruption and even the likes of Kumar Sangakkara was very peripherally concerned about the weather condition.

Instead his focus was firmly on the series that will start with the first Test at the same venue tomorrow.

"Still there is one more day in hand and you know the sky always looks gloomy during this season and on most of the occasions it becomes clear within a short time. There is a very good covering system in this venue, so I am hopeful," said the Sri Lanka vice-captain.

The situation however could be handy for the wicketkeeper cum batsman as he just came home a few days back after playing county cricket for Warwickshire.

"It was a fantastic experience to play county cricket for a good side and I enjoyed everything there. Rain sometimes hampered play there too but it was restarted again and you know the condition is also altogether different from any part of the world. Yes, the experience

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