



Did U Know?

West Indian Daren Ganga became the third captain to be dismissed off the first ball of a Test match when England pacer Ryan Sidebottom got him in the fourth Test in Durham on June 15. The other two are Australia's Warren Bardsley (in 1926) and Sanath Jayasuriya of Sri Lanka (in 1999).



Mohammad Ashraful
(Bangladesh cricket captain)
"I was desperately looking for a big score to silence the critics who thought captaincy put a burden on me as a batsman."
After scoring an unbeaten century in the second innings of the second Test against Sri Lanka.

'I'm unsure of playing shots'

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY from Colombo

"Trying to play Test cricket according to its nature" has become the most used statement in Bangladesh's ongoing tour of Sri Lanka.

Captain Mohammad Ashraful has already said that they need some time to adjust to the approach they have been working on since the new team management took over.

It seems that the cricketers are in a complete conundrum after first innings debacles in both the Tests, which saw them being dismissed for 89 and then 62, the lowest-ever total for them.

So, have the Tigers been playing the five-day game with any other approach?

Spending as much time as possible in the middle is the 'mantra' of Test cricket but suddenly and surprisingly, it has become a new thing for the team as new captain Ashraful, who salvaged some pride with a splendid 129* in the second Test that ended on Thursday, demanded that the way they have

been thinking on the issue, also in practice, was something new in his career.

He added that the cricketers are trying to overcome the tendency of playing too many shots like they do in one-day cricket and believed that it worked just a little in the last two games despite the fact that they were dismissed quickly.

The reality is that there was a lack of balancing act for most of the batsmen, opener Shahriar Nafees being an example with scores of 15, 38, 0, and 20. It looks like the Bangladeshi batsmen have also failed to swiftly coordinate brain-work with their eye and feet during batting.

Sometimes they were bogged down and at times appeared far too ambitious with their shots but at least young Mushfiqur Rahim with his polished 80 on Thursday showed the way of surviving against a world-class attack.

Everybody is aware of Ashraful's ability but what the teenage wicketkeeper did is a sight for sore eyes. The way he batted has not only impressed his teammates, but

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SWIMMING BETTER THAN BATTING? Bangladesh batsmen Shahriar Nafees (L) and Habibul Bashar, who failed to deliver the goods in the first two Tests, cool off at the Taj Samudra Hotel pool in Colombo after a gym session yesterday afternoon.

Tushar off to Colombo

SPORTS REPORTER

In a bid to bolster the Tigers' batting line-up, batsman Tushar Imran left Dhaka for Colombo on a Singapore Airlines flight last night.

The team management, after discussions with chief selector Faruque Ahmed, decided that an extra batsman was the need of the hour following batting debacles in the ongoing Test series which culminated in the team being bowled out for its lowest Test total of 62 in the first innings of the just-concluded second Test match at the P Sara Stadium in Colombo.

Tushar, who was originally included among the one-day specialists, will arrive in Colombo this morning and travel with the team to Kandy to prepare for the final Test.

Talking to the Daily Star before departing, Tushar said that he was well prepared, both physically and mentally, to play at the Asgiriya Stadium.

"In my mind, I was ready to play after watching the two matches over the past weeks. The situation in Sri Lanka must have required me to travel earlier than expected," said the right-handed batsman.

"I hope to play the Test since I was called up in this way," added Tushar.

For a man with immense ability, Tushar has only played four Tests, last of which was incidentally in Sri Lanka two years ago.

Moore banks on C'paul

Eng-WI decider today

Cricket

AFP, Loughborough

West Indies coach David Moore is confident key batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul will be fit for Saturday's decisive one-day international against England at Trent Bridge.

Chanderpaul, who averaged over 148 during England's 3-0 Test series win, showed his ability as a one-day batsman by scoring 116 not out in West Indies' 61-run victory in the second one-day international at Edgbaston on Wednesday.

However, during the course of his innings, the 32-year-old strained ligaments in his right ankle and was unable to field.

"They (the medical staff) have worked very hard on his injury over the last couple of days and he's having a hit in the nets on Friday," Moore told reporters at England's National Cricket Performance Centre here Friday, where both teams trained indoors after rain prevented outdoor practice at Trent Bridge.

"We are very hopeful he will be right for tomorrow (Saturday)," the Australian added. "The physio has been working on him constantly."

"It's been very advantageous for us to have Shiv playing in the role he's played," Moore said of the experienced left-hander, promoted to No 3 from No 5 at Edgbaston after his unbeaten 53 in West Indies' 79-run defeat in Sunday's series opener at Lord's.

"He's very versatile. He's played exceptionally well in the Test matches and now in the Twenty20s and one-dayers he's been fantastic."

"It just shows the quality of the player. When a man like that can do what he's done, it's no fluke."

"We know he works very hard at his game and he's a true professional."

He added Chanderpaul, who batted for over 24 hours in the Test series, had been an inspiration to all his teammates.

"The good thing about Chanderpaul is he's always available to talk to players, he never cuts himself off."

"You don't even have to talk to Chanderpaul, you just stick your head out that window there and see how he trains and you'll see why he scores runs."

"He's obviously got a level of skill but he works very hard at his game."

West Indies, who like England failed to reach the World Cup semifinals in the Caribbean, have gone 20 Tests without a win and Moore said a series success outside the Caribbean would be a cherished achievement.

"It would be nice to win something away from home. As I've been saying from day one of this tour, it's all about consistency and we have let ourselves down badly in our inconsistency."

"If we could put two good games together it would be very good but, in the big picture, it would still only be two games."

Moore, who replaced fellow Australian Bennett King after the World Cup, is set to continue coaching the West Indies during September's World Twenty20 in South Africa. But after that his future is uncertain.

"The arrangement was, unless they found someone, I would con-

tinue on for the Twenty20 but I'm not really concerned about where I'm going at the moment," Moore said.

Meanwhile, England one-day captain Paul Collingwood said Friday he'd been surprised by the size of the fine imposed on teammate James Anderson following the fast bowler's clash with West Indies batsman Runako Morton.

"I probably didn't expect him to get fined as much he did. As players, we all know the boundaries we can go up to."

"Generally, a lot of that stuff happens out in the middle and it is cricket but on this occasion it just went over the mark."

"That was one incident. We've had great relations with the West Indies during the Test series and so far in the one-day series," Collingwood added.

TEAMS
ENGLAND (from): Paul Collingwood (capt), Alastair Cook, Matt Prior, Ian Bell, Kevin Pietersen, Stuart Broad, Ryan Sidebottom, James Anderson, Monty Panesar, Jonathan Trott, Michael Yardy, Liam Plunkett.
WEST INDIES (from): Chris Gayle (capt), Devon Smith, Shiv Chanderpaul, Marlon Samuels, Runako Morton, Dwayne Bravo, Dwayne Smith, Daren Sammy, Denesh Ramdin (wkt), Daren Powell, Ravi Rampaul, Fidel Edwards, Lendl Simmons, Austin Richards Jr.

Umpires: Mark Benson and Brian Jerling.

Nayeem shows interest

SPORTS REPORTER

Just a day after Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) officially announced it will approach Syed Nayeemuddin as a candidate to take over the national team, the Indian coach said he would be honoured to lead Bangladesh.

Former Indian international and national coach Nayeemuddin, who is in charge of struggling Dhaka giants Brothers Union, told reporters yesterday at the club tent that he is completely ready to take the challenge.

"To work in a country that gave birth to a footballer like Jadukar Samad is an honour. The culture here is same as India and it would be easy to work for me," said the master coach, who led Brothers to their first Premiership title in 2004 and guided India to regain the regional SAFF Championship in the next year with a 2-0 win over Bangladesh.

In his second stint as Brothers coach, Nayeemuddin who also managed the top Indian clubs like East Bengal and Mohun Bagan, informed that he has already had talks with the BFF officials but Brothers manager Amer Khan is handling the issue.

"We need to clear a few things like salaries and type of work. I will need full assistance of the federation," said the man from Hyderabad, whose main task would be leading Bangladesh to this year's SAFF Championship in Sri Lanka and Maldives.

"The difference between Bangladesh and Indian football is little. The Indians get more exposure and more money because of

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Nadal, Federer thru'

AP, Wimbledon



semifinals and moving one step closer to a fifth straight title.

Federer dropped a set for the first time this year at the All England Club, but still beat number twenty Juan Carlos Ferrero 7-6 (2), 3-6, 6-1, 6-3.

"OK, a set is lost, but a match isn't lost," Federer said.

The man he beat in last year's final, Rafael Nadal, was back to his best, playing for the fifth consecutive day and reaching the semifinals by beating Tomas Berdych 7-6 (1), 6-4, 6-2.

Federer was broken in the first set Thursday, when he and Ferrero played for 37 minutes before play was suspended by rain at deuce at 5-5. The 10-time Grand Slam champion won the opening two points on serve Friday, and then easily won the tiebreaker after Ferrero held.

On match point with Ferrero serving, Federer flicked a cross-court forehand that Ferrero couldn't reach.

Ferrero, the 2003 French Open champion and a former number one, broke Federer to go up 5-3 in the second set and then served it out, but that was the end of the Spaniard's influence on the match.

From 1-1 in third set, Federer won 20 of next 24 points to take set.

Before his brief spell on court Thursday, the top-ranked Federer had not played since beating Marat Safin last Friday in the third round. His fourth-round opponent, Tommy Haas, withdrew with an injury, giving

Federer almost a week off. "It was hard for me. I had many days off," Federer said. "I'm just really happy I came through it and I'm back in the rhythm now."

Federer, who stretched his grass-court winning streak to 52, is trying to win a fifth consecutive Wimbledon title, something only Bjorn Borg has done in the past 100

years. Nadal was broken once early in the first set, but didn't face any more serious challenges. He broke the Czech in the opening games of the second and third sets.

Nadal had his first match point

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Swiss world number one Roger Federer plays a drop volley against former number one Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain during their quarterfinal match at Wimbledon yesterday.

What to WATCH

STAR Sports
Wimbledon Championships
Ladies Singles Final
Live from 6.30 pm
ESPN
England Vs West Indies
Third One-Day International
Live from 3.43pm
TEN Sports
Copa America
Quarterfinals
Venezuela Vs Uruguay
Live from 4.05am (Sunday)
Chile Vs Brazil
Live from 6.50am (Sunday)

DAY'S EVENT

B. League
Ctg Mohammedan Vs Farashganj
Venue: MA Aziz Stadium
Time: 4.15pm

Eves win by 90 runs

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh women's cricket team recorded a 90-run victory over hosts Thailand in a limited-overs preparation match in Bangkok yesterday.

Batting first, the visitors posted 128 for 9 in the stipulated 30 overs with skipper Tazkia Akhter contributing 27 and Irene Sultana 26 not out.

In reply, the Thai eves were dismissed for 38 as Shamima Akhter Pinky scalped four wickets and Champa Chakma two.

Bangladesh face Thailand in the 2nd and last preparation match today before leaving for Malaysia on July 9 to take part in the eight-nation ACC Women's Cricket tournament which begins in Johor Baru on July 11.

Lara, Donald to play for Bears

INTERNET, undated

West Indies great Brian Lara is coming out of retirement for a one-off Twenty20 match in August, as part of the 125th anniversary celebrations for his old club Warwickshire. Lara, whose explosive batting helped lift the County Championship in a memorable 1994 season, will be joined by Allan Donald and his former captain,

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GOOOOOOAAA! Argentina midfield enforcer Javier Mascherano (R) shoots past the outstretched hands of Paraguay goalkeeper to score during their Copa America group match at the Metropolitan stadium in Barquisimeto on Thursday.

Argentina in last eight

INTERNET, undated



Argentina wrapped up Group C courtesy of a 1-0 victory over Paraguay in Copa America on Thursday night.

Liverpool midfielder Javier Mascherano scored the crucial goal 12 minutes from the end as Alfio Basile's men recorded their third consecutive victory in South America's showpiece tournament.

Argentina (3-0-0) will now return here Sunday to take on Peru (1-1-1), the Group A runner-up, while Paraguay (2-1-0) faces Group B winner Mexico (2-0-1) in Maturin on the same day.

With both teams already assured of a place in the last eight thanks to victories over Colombia and the United States, both Basile and Gerardo Martin took the opportunity to field much-changed lineups.

Rodrigo Palacio, Real Madrid midfielder Fernando Gago and West Ham United striker Carlos Tevez came in for Argentina, while keeper Aldo Bobadilla and midfielder Aureliano Torres started for Paraguay.

Mascherano won the game in the 78th minute when he picked up a loose ball on the edge of the area and beat Bobadilla with a precise shot.

Mascherano admitted he was surprised to get on the scoresheet.

"Isn't usual for me to score, so I'm very happy for the goal and the win," he said. "We played very well. I scored but the most important thing was that Argentina won and we played good football."

Argentina began well and Zaragoza star Pablo Aimar could have opened the scoring but just failed to get on the end of Luis Gonzalez's pass.

The Albicelestes began to dominate possession and limited Paraguay to sporadic counterattacks, though keeper Roberto Abbondanzieri had to pull off an impressive save to deny striker Salvador Cabanas just after the half-hour mark.

"We were clearly the better side," Basile said. "We had a few absentees and the players responded. The 'Pato' (Abbondanzieri) had a great night. He saved two of the game's best chances."

Tevez hit the post 10 minutes after the break and Palacio saw an effort come back off the bar as Argentina came close to breaking the deadlock at the start of the second half.

Dante Lopez had Paraguay's best chance of the second period but Getafe stopper Abbondanzieri again was equal to the challenge.

Basile is also expecting a tough encounter against Peru.

Uruguay. Basile said. "I like the Peruvian team's style and it will be a close game. We don't have time to fix our weaknesses but I hope the team can improve."

Elsewhere, Colombia claimed its first victory of the 2007 Copa America as Jaime Castillon headed the only goal of the game to overcome the United States, 1-0.

Neither side had claimed a point before the encounter and were playing for little other than pride, but it was the South Americans who took all three points to leave a young, inexperienced American side propping up Group C in stark contrast to their triumphant Gold Cup campaign just under two weeks ago.

Both teams exited the tournament early, but Castillon was still upbeat about his experience.

"I'm happy because I had the opportunity to play in the Copa America and the coach gave me a chance against Argentina," Castillon said.

The United States had the first real attempt on goal when Herculez Gomez struck a free-kick from outside the box through the wall that went wide of goalkeeper Robinson Zapata's right post.

However, the Colombians went ahead in the 16th minute when Castillon got across his marker and powered a header past Brad Guzman in the American goal.