

West Indies dump Dutch

CRICINFO, undated

Netherlands proved no match for a confident West Indies side as they went down by 10 wickets in the opening match of the quadrangular series at the Clontarf Cricket Club ground in Dublin yesterday.

Dwayne Smith's medium-pace claimed four wickets as Netherlands collapsed for 80, then Chris Gayle's 41-ball half-century ensured West Indies sped home before the approaching clouds caused any problems.

West Indies needed less than 15 overs to knock off the runs as Gayle slammed six fours a six. Devon Smith provided solid support in what was nothing more than an extended net and completed the victory with a flick to fine leg.

Netherlands' batsmen had no such luxury as only three managed to reach double figures. Their problems started early when Ravi Rampaul trapped Tim de Groot lbw in the fourth over and Bas Zuiderent, formerly of Sussex, fell in similar fashion. Alex Kervezee, who is on Worcestershire's books, managed five boundaries in his 22 before being caught behind off Powell and the innings continued in a rapid downward spiral.

Denesh Ramdin was kept busy behind the stumps, collecting five catches, as West Indies' seamers caused plenty of problems. Fidel Edwards proved too quick for Peter Borren then Smith's swing did the bulk of the remaining damage. Darren Sammy, who missed out on the one-day series against England, claimed two cheap wickets as the innings folded inside 32 overs.

There was no sign of West Indies relaxing following the series win against England with Gayle determined not to slip up against the Associate Members.

Netherlands, though, were clearly not up to the battle and are a few rungs down from the likes of Ireland, who make up the tournament alongside Scotland. Netherlands have a chance to put up a better showing when they take on the hosts, at Stormont, on Wednesday.

Malouda now

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He won the first of his 30 international caps in November 2004 and was part of Raymond Domenech's side that made it through to last year's World Cup final against Italy.

Chelsea's new recruit won the French championship four times with Lyon and was voted the best player in the French first division in 2006-07.

Malouda is Chelsea's latest summer purchase following Steve Sidwell, Claudio Pizarro and Tal Ben Haim.

Hammers

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times in 42 appearances but failed to establish himself as a regular in Raheem Sterling's starting line-up.

West Ham manager Alan Curbishley will hope to pair Bellamy with Dean Ashton, who is on the verge of making his return from a long-term ankle injury.

Star man Carlos Tevez is on the verge of a two-year loan move to Manchester United.

Jekyll & Hyde

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She had been estranged from them and father Jose since the age of 17, the latest miserable chapter in a series of family tragedies which had seen sister Florence killed in a car accident and the death from cancer of her mother, Francoise when Henin was just 12.

But Henin is now divorced, back with her siblings and talking to her father again.

"We talk to each other every day. Not everything is easy but it's great," said the world number one.

Eyes on Emily

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from five second-leg matches including a hatrick to take his tally to nine but it seems that the absence of Argentine defender Mariano Caporale has been a setback.

"Three out of four goals scored against us in the second leg were for defensive lapses. We have to get out of that. We are not in a position to drop points because we have only a three-point advantage over Mohammad, who have played most of their big matches.

"So, every match is pressure for us. But it's possible to beat a team like Brothers if our players can apply themselves in the field," added the former national midfielder.

Amalek Sen, who took over from Argentine coach Diego Cruciani in the latter part of the first-leg, has guaranteed only one foreigner in the side in Ibrahim as Emily's partner up front.

Obi Mikel John's place at the right side is under threat from inform Abdullah Parvez, who has shown the aptitude to outsmart the Nigerian.



PHOTO: AFP
China midfielder Zhou Haibin (C) and Malaysia player Muhammad Shukor Adan (R) tussle for the ball during their Asian Cup group match at the Bukit Jalil Stadium in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday.

China restore order

AFP, Jakarta



China broke the curse of the Asian Cup in emphatic style on Tuesday when they thrashed lowly Malaysia 5-1 to become the first favoured team to win so far in the competition.

Han Peng and Wang Dong both grabbed doubles and Shao Jiayi was also on target as the 2004 runners-up took an early lead in Group C, sending a message to their title rivals and boosting embattled coach Zhu Guanghu.

Favourites Australia and defending champions Japan have both failed to overcome unfancied sides while there have been upset wins for Indonesia and Vietnam in the first round of matches.

"This is just the start, it was the first match and we have two more matches," said China's Zhu.

"I think the final result of the group is what matters. We called back overseas players like Sun Jihai, Zheng Zhi and Shao Jiayi and the co-hosts' strikers were out-muscled by the Chinese defence."

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China accelerated from a pedestrian start on 15 minutes when midfielder Shao unlocked the Malaysian defence with a through-ball to Wang, whose chipped cross to the far post was headed in by the unmarked Han.

Shao was on hand 21 minutes later to steer home captain Zheng's cross from the left which was narrowly missed by the diving Han.

Changchun Yatai midfielder Wang put it beyond doubt shortly after the break with a deflected shot which bounced through Fauzie Nan's legs and trickled into the bottom corner.

Han stole his second on 55 minutes when he met a diagonal cross from the left first-time before Wang rounded off the scoring with a looping header in injury time.

Malaysia's chief threat was from free-kicks and corners but Hardi Jaafar's delivery was usually lacking and the co-hosts' strikers were out-muscled by the Chinese defence.

Regional powerhouses Iran play Uzbekistan in Group C's second match on Wednesday.

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China are bidding to win their first ever Asian Cup after losing the 2004 final against Japan. But they have been unimpressive since and coach Zhu is under orders to reach the last four "or else."

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Eng thinking of Marcus

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

England are weighing up whether to give an international recall to Marcus Trescothick.

The 31-year-old opening batsman has not played for England in nearly a year and left the Ashes tour of Australia before the first Test with a recurrence of a stress related illness he first suffered in India in 2006.

Both Trescothick and England have been coy about an international return for the Somerset left-hander.

But to have a chance of playing in September's inaugural World Twenty20 in South Africa he must be named in the provisional 30-man squad on Wednesday.

International Cricket Council playing conditions allow nations to select a large initial squad which must be cut to 15 by August 11.

Trescothick is one of his country's best limited overs batsmen of all-time and following the 2-1 one-day series defeat against the

West Indies, concluded at Trent Bridge here Saturday, England coach Peter Moores indicated he was still in the selectors' thoughts.

"Marcus is a very good one-day player and when we announce that 30, if he's in, you will know the time is right for him to come back in."

It was not only Trescothick whom England missed as West Indies, who had been 1-0 down, secured their first trophy abroad since defeating their hosts in the 2004 Champions Trophy final at The Oval with an overwhelming 93-run win at Trent Bridge.

England, in the absence of injured all-rounder Andrew Flintoff, only took five wickets at Trent Bridge, just as they'd done during Wednesday's 61-run defeat at Edgbaston.

However, Moores insisted he did not want to use injuries or the notion of a team in transition as excuses for defeat for an England side that, like the West Indies, failed to reach the World Cup semifinals.

"As with the rest of the support team we want the right person to do that job," said Moores. "If we get a fielding coach we want him to influence fielding in England not just at England level."

Replying to a question if it would be a burden for him to be considered as the symbol of national unity, Murali said that it would be a big satisfaction for him.

"I was born in Kandy and grew up with Muslims, Sinhalese, Tamils, Hindus and Christians. So it is not a problem for me. What I think is that cricket and politics are two different things," he replied.

The champion bowler, who took 64 wickets against Bangladesh, hardly found any improvement in Bangladesh's performance in the Test arena.

"I think they are improving, but they have a long way to go in Test cricket. In Test cricket the Tigers have not improved," he stated.

Murali bowled against all the great batsmen over the last two decades and among them he rated former West Indies captain Brian Lara as the best he

bowed against.

"Lot of batsmen played me very well, but I believe only Lara was a standout. He has aggregated over six hundred runs in three Tests here alone and all those innings were amazing. Not many people play spin better than Lara did and that's why he was the number one batsman in the world," he explained.

Once it was only Murali and Chaminda Vaas who had to lead the bowling attack but now there are a number of quality bowlers who are also making big contributions.

"Now the other bowlers are coming through and we have some very good fast bowlers. Definitely I enjoy it and I like to share the work with others," he stated.

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Giles unsure about future

BBC ONLINE, undated

England spinner Ashley Giles admits his cricketing future is in the balance as he fights to regain fitness after a third hip operation.

The Warwickshire star, who has already ruled himself out of this season, fears he may not be able to recover fully without suffering lasting damage.

The 34-year-old said: "The underlying thing is that you never know how much long-term damage you are doing."

"I've never thought it is not worth it, but I have to start thinking about it."

Giles fought back from a year out to play in the first two Tests of last winter's Ashes series but returned home early from Australia following a serious illness to his wife Stine.

He then suffered an injury setback and underwent his third operation just before the start of the season.

The left-arm slow bowler believes it will be at least another four weeks before he can attempt running again and another two months after that before he will be fit enough to consider playing cricket again.

He added: "I certainly don't want to look at hip replacements. It is a difficult time because cricket is what I do and cricket is what I have done for 20 years, but I do have to start thinking about the implications."

Ash happy

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relaxed in the middle and they were not noisy enough to occupy the crease.

"I don't think we got relaxed and it's also not true that we lacked seriousness. If (Mahela) meant we tried to enjoy the game then I am happy with that. I know it's a tough ride and nothing could be achieved overnight. Sri Lanka also couldn't achieve anything overnight," he said.

About the inclusion of Tushar Imran, the new Bangladesh captain expressed his guarded optimism.

"He is a good player but we should be careful about expectations because he has joined the team in the middle of the tour. Mehrab's omission is a bit unfortunate but he will definitely be back. We were forced to bring Tushar after Shakib (Al Hasan) failed to fulfil our expectation although he is very good player," he explained.

Malaysia have slumped since their heyday in the 1970s and, with a FIFA ranking of 149, carry the unwanted tag of the Asian Cup in final qualifying.

"We will try to win all our matches but Iran are a very good team and I think a draw with Iran is a good result for any team," he said.

The former Soviet republic will at least be confident of improving on the last Asian Cup, where they shipped 14 goals against just two scored in their three group matches.

Europe Fergie's

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squad with the number of games there. Yes, it's going to take management. But I think players understand today quite clearly that in order to challenge for everything you do need a strong squad and it means that they don't play all the games.

England are just a point ahead of eighth-placed West Indies in the ICC one-day rankings and the tourists have a chance to improve their ranking in the quadrangular event, also featuring Ireland, Scotland and the Netherlands, starting in Dublin on Tuesday.

Meanwhile England, who have three Tests against India before they take on Rahul Dravid's men in seven one-day internationals, are considering appointing a fielding coach.

Jonty Rhodes, arguably the outstanding fielder of his era, has been linked with joining a backroom staff that already includes his former South Africa teammate Allan Donald, now an England bowling coach.

"As with the rest of the support team we want the right person to do that job," said Moores. "If we get a fielding coach we want him to influence fielding in England not just at England level."

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World Soccer magazine carried out a poll amongst global experts to bring what they hope was a definitive list of the greatest goals, teams and matches of all time.

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Arjuna surprises Dav

Cricket

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