

Ireland reach 222

CRICINFO, undated

Niall O'Brien's 72 helped Ireland to 222, which should be a competitive score on a slow wicket at Stormont. They need to win this match with a bonus point to share in the trophy.

John Blain and Paul Hoffman bowled tight first up for Scotland, prompting the dismissal of William Porterfield, attempting to pull, and opening the way for Gordon Drummond to strike to remove Eoin Morgan for 10 in his first over.

Ireland recovered from their early losses, though, through the combined forces of O'Brien and Andre Botha as they put on 46 for the third wicket. Botha finally came good with 42 following a promising 27 against Netherlands and a duck against West Indies.

Both played patiently at first, picking off the odd loose delivery, before opening up later. A change of ends finally worked for Majid Haq, who had Botha stumped.

Kevin O'Brien and Andrew Cusack moved the score along steadily, but it was the reliable Trent Johnston who boosted Ireland later, with a 57-run stand that brought Ireland near the 200-mark before he and O'Brien fell in the same Haq over.

The two sides have faced each other twice before at one-day level, with honours even.

PM salutes

FROM PAGE 17

"So many years at the top takes a lot out of you but I am still hungry for wickets and that is what matters."

It took him just 12 Tests to move from 600 to 700 wickets.

Sri Lanka are due to tour Australia for two Test matches in November, but Muralidaran was unsure of becoming the leading bowler in Warne's backyard.

"Wickets there usually help fast bowlers, but I am more concerned about winning the series, something we have not done in Australia," he said.

It will be fitting if Muralidaran gets crowned in Australia where he has endured the most humiliating moments of his otherwise glittering career.

The off-spinner was controversially called for throwing by Australian umpire Darrell Hair during Sri Lanka's tour Down Under in 1995.

Two years later, another Australian umpire, Ross Emerson, called Muralidaran during a one-day series there, prompting a biomechanical analysis of his bowling action at the University of Western Australia in Perth.

The International Cricket Council cleared Muralidaran and his bowling action has since not been questioned by umpires around the world.



PHOTO STAR
Chittagong Mohammedan's Anthony (L) in a midfield tussle with Brothers Union's Monwar during their B. League match at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Broad wins call-up

Cricket

AFP, London

Uncapped pace bowler Stuart Broad was called up Sunday into England's 13-man squad for the first Test against India starting at Lord's on Thursday.

Broad, 21, was included after fast bowler Stephen Harmison was graded "extremely doubtful" on Saturday for the opening match of a three-Test series after suffering a recurrence of his hernia injury.

Leicestershire's Broad, the son of former England opening batsman Chris, has played nine one-day internationals but has yet to play in a Test.

He was included along with Lancashire quick James Anderson, the pair set to compete for the final place in England's starting side if Harmison is unfit.

England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, said: "Stephen Harmison's hernia problem will be assessed by our medical team when the team reports for the first Test on Monday evening.

"At this stage, his chances of playing are slim and the choice for the final pace bowling position will be between James Anderson and Stuart Broad.

"They are different types of bowlers and the final decision will depend on our assessment of the pitch and the weather conditions at Lord's."

"It will be very disappointing if we are without Stephen as he has been in excellent form for Durham recently and looked to be back to his best in the last Test against the West Indies at Chester-le-Street."

Graveney added: "It may mean that we have to go into this series with a relatively inexperienced attack, but I am sure all of the bowlers concerned will relish the opportunity to test themselves against a side which has one of the strongest batting line-ups in world cricket."

Broad currently playing against India for England Lions, the 'A' side, in a three-day match which concludes at Chelmsford on Sunday said: "Test cricket is the ultimate goal which every cricketer aspires to."

"I'm just looking forward to it and linking up with the squad," he also told Sky Sports having so far taken two wickets in a match where India batting star Sachin Tendulkar has scored 171.

Harmison bowled just five overs Friday in Durham's ongoing match away to county champions Sussex before being ruled out of the remainder of the game.

The 28-year-old originally sustained the injury at his Riverside

home ground nearly a month ago during England's fourth Test win over the West Indies which gave them a 3-0 series victory.

However, he opted against immediate surgery after being advised he could play in the India series.

Were either Broad or Anderson to play at Lord's, they would be the only change to the XI that beat West Indies by seven wickets at the Riverside in June with pace bowler all-rounder Andrew Flintoff still sidelined by a recurrence of a long-standing ankle injury.

England captain Michael Vaughan and experienced pace bowler Matthew Hoggard are the only two survivors from the team that won the corresponding fixture against India five years ago.

The Yorkshire pair helped England to a 170-run victory at Lord's with Vaughan scoring 100 in the second innings and Hoggard returning match figures of seven for 120.

SQUAD

Andrew Strauss, Alastair Cook, Michael Vaughan (capt), Kevin Pietersen, Paul Collingwood, Ian Bell, Matthew Prior (wk), Stephen Harmison, Ryan Sidebottom, Matthew Hoggard, Monty Panesar, James Anderson, Stuart Broad.

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Gooch backs old foe

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Graham Gooch, the former England captain who played his last Test at the age of 42, has urged India's experienced middle-order batsmen to convert the final phase of their careers into a "golden one", and said they still had four or five years left in them. Having watched the Indians' tour game against England Lions at Chelmsford, Gooch gushed about Sachin Tendulkar's 171 on the second day and felt there was nothing to suggest that his powers were on the decline.

Gooch scored more than half his Test runs, including 12 hundreds, after he passed the age of 35, and was the top-scorer in the 1990 and 1991 seasons. "I think the likes of Sachin, (Rahul) Dravid, (Sourav) Ganguly are all 34-35 and for me that was the golden period of my cricket," he told Cricinfo at the County Ground in Chelmsford. "My batting got better in those four or five years, so there's no reason why they can't go on."

Gooch has occasionally

spoken of the demands that age imposes and even changed his game accordingly. While he used to attack more often in the early part of his career, he's off late preferred the more compact style, accumulating more often than blazing away. He spoke about this after his classy innings on Friday and indicated that his body dictated the way he approached an innings.

Gooch echoed the sentiment. "It (carrying on despite the growing years) depends on your desire, your fitness ... and if you haven't got the desire you aren't going to be able to remain fit. You need to work that much harder, naturally you're deteriorating and you're concentration and general sharpness disappears. There's no reason why they can't carry on for 4-5 years."

However, he was quick to point out that Tendulkar still possesses all the attributes. "He's still standing still, watching the ball and has the ability to counterattack. I didn't see anything on Friday to suggest his powers are on the decline. It's how much you want to keep going, whether you've got aspirations still. He'll hope he's got one last flurry over here to entertain people in

this country. If he and the rest of the batsmen can put up 500-plus in their matches they're definitely going to stand a chance."

India's senior-most cricketer, though, isn't a middle-order batsman but a legspinner who will be expected to carry the attack. Gooch, who faced a bespectacled 20-year-old Anil Kumble on the 1990 tour, believes he can pull it off. "He played the second Test at Old Trafford in 1990 (when Tendulkar got his first Test hundred) and what I liked about him was his desire to take wickets. I faced Derek Underwood early in my career and they were similar with regard to the pace they bowled with. Underwood wasn't a big spinner of the ball but relied on accuracy. Same with Kumble."

"He'll get bounce on English pitches and that's what he mainly relies on for those catches at silly point and bat-pad. He's not a big turner like conventional spinners but his record stands the test of time. The pitches in England don't deteriorate as much these days and are tough for spinners but he doesn't rely too much on a pitch that spins square, it's the bounce that gets him wickets usually."

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Army crush Air Force

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army thrashed Bangladesh Air Force 13-3 in the opening match of the Inter-Services Swimming and Water Polo competition that began at the Bangladesh Navy Swimming Complex in Banani yesterday.

In the 100m backstroke, Rubel Rana of Navy won gold.

The Army team showed their dominance in the 100m breaststroke as Jahangir Alam and Kamal Hossain won gold and silver respectively.

Meanwhile, in the 4x200m freestyle, Navy grabbed gold, Army silver and Air Force took bronze.

Earlier, acting PSO of the Armed Forces Division Commodore Zarzil Islam inaugurated the meet as chief guest.

Some 157 competitors are taking part in the competition.

Afriди backs

FROM PAGE 17

Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif, who feel the new rule penalised a bowler harshly if he sent down a no-ball, but felt the two bowlers would not face any problem.

"In modern cricket, Shoaib and Asif are two of the most disciplined and accurate bowlers I have seen in one-day internationals. They bowl very few no-balls. So I don't see them facing any problems," he said.

"The new rule will in fact make the other bowlers also more accurate and disciplined to avoid giving away bonus runs and that is a good thing as less wides and no balls means less time lost in a match." Shoaib and Asif have expressed reservations over the rule, effective from October 1, which says on the very next delivery after a no-ball, the batsman can take a free hit without any danger of being dismissed unless he is run-out.

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