

Odoyo gives Kenya edge

AFP, Mombasa
All-rounder Thomas Odoyo scored a half-century to give Kenya the edge on the first day of the second three-day match against India A at the Mombasa Sports Club on Friday.

After being put into bat, Kenya were all out for 218 while India were 30-2 in reply at the close. Odoyo, who missed the first match with a groin injury, hit a patient 51 off 108 balls and a contribution of 41 from Nehemiah Odhiambo against an aggressive pace attack of Irfan Pathan, Pankaj Singh and Prayagn Ojha who grabbed three wickets each.

India A made a shaky start losing opener Neeraj Patel for one and skipper Mohammed Kaif who made only four runs before he was caught by wicketkeeper Maurice Ouma off the bowling of Nehemiah Odhiambo.

Batsman-wicketkeeper Pathiv Patel was on 19 with Irfan Pathan on four as Kenya finished the day with a 188-run lead.

Dramatic win

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to chip over him. Berbatov still had plenty of work to do though and Nyrøn Nosworthy bailed out Gordon by blocking the Bulgarian's shot.

Sunderland's caution on their return to the top-flight was understandable but their visitors had far fewer excuses for their tepid display.

Jol's big-spending since last season has raised expectations that Spurs will finally break into the top four, but they were content to coast along when the chance to make an early statement was there for the taking.

Admittedly Jol was without his first choice defensive pairing after injuries to Ledley King and Michael Dawson, but it was in attack that Spurs lacked invention.

Sensing the need to shake his team out of their lethargy, Jol sent on Darren Bent, but even the 16 million pounds striker was unable to make any difference.

Tottenham's lack of penetration ensured Sunderland were always in the game and Keane gave Chopra his debut in the closing stages as he tried to snatch the win.

The gamble paid off 13 seconds from the end of stoppage time. Spurs failed to deal with a deep Wallace cross and Chopra pounced on the loose ball to steer a low shot past Robinson.

Keane raised an arm in muted celebration while the rest of the stadium exploded in delight. It was a dramatic finish that the game hardly deserved, but Keane and company won't care about that.

And it's Anil

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left-arm quick Ryan Sidebottom had 93 against his name before a side injury meant he stopped bowling at lunch.

England were left on the brink of losing their six-year unbeaten record in home Test series.

But coach Peter Moores said they had to remain upbeat: "You never really say you just want to save the game because that's a negative way of looking at it."

And Kumble added: "I think it's still a good wicket. I got a hundred, that should give out a message."

Don't cry

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fighting chance of staying up. "The manager made it clear when Birmingham went down two seasons ago that there were too many older players who were here for a pay day," he said.

"He then looked to sign a different player, a hungrier type of player and it paid off with us getting promotion.

"He has made good signings and a similar type of signings to before, in the sense that they are people who will work for the shirt.

"There is a good bit of banter about the squad, a good team spirit."

Eto'o makes

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Fans Feel survey. "Not every football player earns the same as the best players in the world, but teams should pay accordingly to the popularity and performance of each player.

"If you think football wages are high, you should also question whether the wages paid in the NBA are not too high too.

"We need every little help to ensure football becomes better at each stage, so the best players should charge what they deserve and clubs should pay what they feel each player merits."

Eto'o admitted however that the negative aspect of big-money deals was unwelcome media exposure.

"The pressure exercised by the media has increased because football is an important source of money," he said.

"In order to sell they need to market us correctly. A good way to do it is to invent rumours. This enhances sales, making it a logical tactic to use."



PHOTO: AFP

Spanish sensation Rafael Nadal roars his approval at winning a point over Canadian Frank Dancevic during the Coupe Rogers tournament at the Stade Uniprix in Montreal on Friday.

Nadal in last four

Tennis

AFP, Montreal

Rafael Nadal came through a battle with another huge hitter, holding off a charge from Canadian Frank Dancevic to join Roger Federer in the final four of the Montreal Masters on Friday.

Dancevic, ranked 89 spots below the Spanish world number two, put up a ferocious first set in front of 11,000 fans. But his bid to become the first home player into the Canadian semi-finals since 1969 fell short as Nadal triumphed 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Nadal dropped the first set on a break, but found his range to save seven break points in the second as Dancevic needed multiple treatments for a back problem. The Roland Garros champion from Spain stayed in command in the third.

"It was a beautiful match, he played very well," said Nadal. "It was tough for me out there."

Nadal improved his ATP-best season mark to 59-8 after surviving the local hero, a finalist last month at Indianapolis.

Victory hands Nadal, winner of

the event the last time it was played here in 2005, a Saturday date with Serb Novak Djokovic, who beat Andy Roddick 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

Nadal has won five of six against Djokovic, the last in the Wimbledon semis, but was beaten by the Serb on hard court.

"I went in really nervous against a player like Roddick," said the 20-year-old Djokovic. "You know he has a fast and precise serve and can put a lot of pressure on you."

"I didn't play as well from the baseline as I did in my first two matches. It was a difficult match mentally and I survived it. It's always good to win when you don't play your best."

Roger Federer was broken for the first time this week but shrugged off the hiccup to post his tenth successive win over Lleyton Hewitt.

The showdown between current and former generations of number one players put the Swiss top seed into the semi-finals against Czech Radek Stepanek, who surprised Russian fourth seed Nikolay Davydenko 6-4, 7-5.

Federer, aiming to achieve a 50th career title, lifted his record over Hewitt to 12-7 following his 6-3, 6-4 success.

Over the course of that winning

streak, dating back to the 2003 Davis Cup semi-final in Melbourne, he has dropped just three sets.

"It was the first time I've been broken this week," said Federer, 39-5 this season with grand slam titles in Australia and Wimbledon.

"I served better than he did, and that gave me an advantage. It's a pleasure to play Lleyton after two years, we always have tough matches."

"It looked like I was pretty much in control, but the first set took 45 minutes," said Federer. "We both had our chances."

"It went my way in the end because I served well in the important moments."

Victory was the 15th in a row in Canada for Federer, who will try to peg back the surging Stepanek on Saturday.

The former number eight, who has made a successful comeback from a nerve injury, which affected his hand, has won 13 of his last 15 matches.

During that spell he took the title last month in Los Angeles, beating American James Blake in the final.

Top four in semis

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emerged with a 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-2 victory after a chaotic encounter with 18-year-old Victoria Azarenko of Belarus.

Jankovic, whose ranking has climbed to No. 3 in the world as she won four titles this year, found incorrect score calls by the chair umpire and restless spectators a distraction in a match in which she was already struggling.

"It was a circus," said Jankovic,

who nevertheless admitted her biggest problem was her own inconsistency.

"I'm not on my game. I don't have a rhythm," she said. "But I made it. It's not the greatest match from my side, but I got the win."

French Open runner-up Ivanovic defeated Russian Maria Kirilenko 6-4, 6-4.

Kirilenko started strong and led 4-1 in the first set when she had

on-court treatment for blisters on her right foot.

Ivanovic won the next seven games, taking the first set and going up 2-0 in the second.

"I had some time to think about my game when she took a medical timeout," Ivanovic said. "I decided I needed to be more aggressive and it worked well for me."

It wasn't all smooth sailing, however. Leading 5-2 in the second set Ivanovic was broken, but managed to hold on for the victory.

Ivanovic, ranked fifth in the world, said she looked forward to meeting Jankovic, but Jankovic didn't echo that sentiment.

"I don't really think 'Oh, I'm playing a Serbian,'" Jankovic said. "It's just another player on the other side of the net."

Ivanovic has won four of their five WTA meetings, the exception coming in the quarterfinals here last year.

The two compatriots have conflicting memories of earlier encounters.

Ivanovic recalled playing Jankovic in a junior tournament in a converted swimming pool in Belgrade, when she was proud of taking one game from the player three years her senior.

Jankovic had no memory of it. "She was probably confusing me with some other girl. She was actually the better player when we were younger," Jankovic said.

Daily Star oust Ittefaq

SPORTS REPORTER

The Daily Star got off to a rusty start in the Meril Media Cup Football Tournament yesterday.

The otherwise sharpshooters of The Daily Star however came unstruck in the mud at the Bangabandhu National Stadium and had to settle for a goalless draw against The Daily Ittefaq, for whom the result meant an early exit from the seven-a-side annual meet for the media houses.

The leading English daily might rue a few missed opportunities but they could still make grade if the sun shines today and its strike force faces against private TV channel CSB News in a make or break battle.

The second day however saw some worthy winners with The Daily Inqilab posting the biggest win, a 4-1 success over Banglabazar Patrika. The Independent blanked Daily Sangram 3-0 while New Age won the clash of two English dailies 2-0 against Financial Express.

Dark horses UNB recorded a lone goal win against former champions Daily Jugantar. The victory took the private news agency into the last eight of the football festival.

Law unsure on future

BBC ONLINE, undated

Lancashire batsman Stuart Law admitted he is considering retirement after hitting a record-breaking 206 against Yorkshire at Headingley on Saturday.

The Australian-born 38-year-old admits life is getting "harder and harder" at the top level and is not sure whether he wants to play on next season.

"It's up in the air. There's a bit of water to pass under bridge between now and then [retirement]," he said. "I've got to be fair to myself and the club. I have plenty of thinking to do."

Law has now been with Lancashire for six years, and he claims to be in the form of his career.

Come, see

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Mizanuddin of Brothers Union, Ataur Rahman of Muktiyoddha, Kazi Nabil Ahmed and Ashrafuddin Chunnun of Abahani and Mushtaqur Rahman of Mohammedan were present at the occasion.

Ryan's injury

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here at The Oval.

The statement added that the 29-year-old Sidebottom "would continue to receive treatment today (Saturday) and be reassessed tomorrow (Sunday)".

Sidebottom bowled 32 overs, conceding 93 runs, with one wicket as India piled up 664 - their highest Test innings total against England.

England, 1-0 down in the series, need to win to preserve their six-year unbeaten record in home Test campaigns.

They resumed on the third day here Saturday on 24 for one - still needing a further 441 runs to avoid the follow-on.

Alastair Cook was 12 not out and nightwatchman James Anderson five not out.

Ashraf justifies

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when there, Ahsan Malik, director of communications, said "Shoaib came to me but he did not express any grievance over the PCB decision about the fine. He has also talked to Shafiqat Naghmi (PCB's chief operating officer) over the phone but I have no idea what he said to him."

A pulsating

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net with goalkeeper Raphael Schaefer covering the other post.

Stuttgart's new signing, Romanian striker Ciprian Marica was booked for continuing his run deep into the Schalke defence long after the whistle had blown with half-time approaching.

With Schalke leading 1-0 at the break, the Royal Blues just missed a chance to go 2-0 up on 53 minutes when defender Christian Pander drove a direct free-kick just wide of the post.

The game's tempo picked up a pace with three yellow cards in four minutes, but the defending champions were back on level terms when 20-year-old midfielder Khedira unleashed a thunderbolt shot from 30 yards which beat Manuel Neuer on 63 minutes.

Stuttgart took the lead when Neuer brought down Marica in the penalty area after a fierce shot by Brazilian Cacau and Mexican midfielder Pardo smashed home the spotkick on 67 minutes.

But Kobiashvili's replacement Rakitic struck with 14 minutes left to earn a share of the points.

Vettori wants more

Fleming still in ODI plans: Bracewell

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Recently named New Zealand captain of the Twenty20 side for the World Championship in South Africa, Daniel Vettori has said that he would relish the opportunity to lead the one-day and Test sides as well, if the offer comes his way.

Following Stephen Fleming's retirement from one-dayers after the World Cup, a decision on the ODI captaincy would have to be made before New Zealand leave for South Africa in November for a Test tour.

Vettori said that he had aspired to lead the side in all three forms of the game. John Bracewell, the New Zealand coach and member of the selection panel, had hinted earlier that Vettori would be the next in line to lead the Test side. As a one-day captain, Vettori has led his side to eight wins out of 11.

"I'm not daunted by any means," Vettori told the New Zealand Herald. "If my time comes and that's the way

it falls I'd be more than happy to do it. Anybody with captaincy aspirations would love to captain in a Test match. But obviously there are a lot of things to work through before that comes, with what Stephen wants to do and with what the selectors want to do."

Vettori said that he'd been grooming himself for this role while on the field, thinking about the state of the match and coming up with ideas. "The most enjoyable thing is the control in the game, the idea that you can dictate in a lot of ways the momentum, or lack of it," he said. "I've always thought I've got a reasonable cricket brain and my mind always tends to work through ideas and permutations of what can happen. Now I can put those ideas into fruition and that's the most appealing thing."

Meanwhile, coach Bracewell has said that Fleming was still a part of New Zealand's one-day plans despite being dropped from the Twenty20 squad.

Fleming gave up the ODI captaincy after the 2007 World Cup and

Bracewell said that he had been left out of the Twenty20 squad because his batting style wasn't suited to the shorter format, and to give Daniel Vettori, the new captain, space to "breathe" for himself.

"As far as I'm concerned he [Fleming] is still one of our best one-day batsmen given the way we play the game," Bracewell told stuff.co.nz. "We are keen to win, but I think it is going to be a bit of a power game in its initial crudeness and that is not Stephen's game. Also, mobility in the field is a factor. We also wanted to give the new captain a chance to breathe and have a go at leadership without having the old one standing over him."

Vettori, however, hasn't been named captain of the one-day side as yet but Bracewell said it was because New Zealand hadn't named their team. "We've been grooming him for a while and Dan (Vettori) has not done anything to dissuade us from thinking that he is a very good captain."

Kasper warns Aussies

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Michael Kasprovicz, the Australian fast bowler, has said that the upcoming seven-match one-day tour of India in October should be a challenge for his side in tough bowling conditions. He said that the series promises to be an exciting build-up to India's return tour starting in December, which includes three Tests and a triangular tournament also featuring Sri Lanka.

"It's going to be good cricket," Kasprovicz told PTI. "Australia are the World Cup champions. It will be a good test for them in India, where conditions are tough."

Kasprovicz has proved his worth in Indian conditions after three tours, in 1998, 2001 and 2004. In eight Tests he has picked up 19 wickets, including a five-wicket haul, and 11 wickets in six one-dayers.

However, he's been out of the side since the tour of South Africa last year, and injuries to his back and groin have delayed his comeback. Despite Glenn McGrath's retirement, he will still have to fight for a spot with the emergence of Nathan Bracken, Shaun Tait and Stuart Clark as potential seam bowlers.

Looking ahead to India's tour, Kasprovicz highlighted the performance of India's fast bowlers in

England and stated that they could be a handful. The seamers, led by Zaheer Khan, have accounted for 31 out of 40 wickets after the first two Tests.

"The Indian bowlers have been doing well," he said. "They are swinging the ball a lot. The pace attack is a good blend of senior and younger players. Some of them have not been seen before in Australia. This tour will be a good test for them."

With Sachin Tendulkar among the runs in England, Kasprovicz felt the forthcoming series in Australia promises to be an interesting duel between Tendulkar and Ricky Ponting.

"It will be a good series in Australia. I am looking forward to watching it. There will be an interesting duel between Sachin and Ponting when the Indians come."

Reflecting on the new-look Australian Test team following a spurt of retirements, Kasprovicz said that their departure wouldn't affect the team, and the bench strength is strong enough to keep the momentum going. Justin Langer, Damien Martyn, McGrath and Shane Warne retired after the recent Ashes series.

"The Australians have good belief in themselves. There is a good base of players. In the last few years the side has lost some big

players. But it has also provided opportunity for new players to come up. The transition is not a problem."

Wenger hopeful

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table if you don't win the first or second games and that's, psychologically, a big disadvantage. It's unfair to do that because it doesn't exist anywhere else in the world.

"The solution is not to have Premier League games in mid-week. Why could we not start this season one week earlier? Why could we not have played the Champions League qualifier this past week?"

Wenger's mood should be soothed against Fulham, although Lawrie Sanchez's 20 million pounds spending spree has raised expectations in south-west London.

Sanchez and his ambitious chairman Mohamed Al Fayed expect more than a relegation scrap this season.

"My expectations are for us to be a very good side that aren't just making up the numbers in the Premier League," Sanchez said. "We don't want the same situation as last season and there has been a major change of personnel this summer to avoid that."



PHOTO: AFP

South Africa fast bowler Makhaya Ntini (R) shares a light moment with Albie Morkel during the team presentation ceremony of the T20 Cricket World Championships at Victoria and Albert waterfront in Cape Town on Saturday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

A crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Clues include 'Sphere news-paper', 'Batman', 'Crib', 'Comic actor', 'Pennants', 'Flying up', 'Push', 'Grant's place', 'Ram's ma'am', 'Remark', 'Corn spike', 'Governor', 'Tease', 'Good-naturedly', 'Substantial', 'Taxpayers' fears', 'Dizziness', 'Steward', 'Aussie coat of arms', 'Cornfield noise', 'Shade', 'Billboards', 'Svelte', 'Sleeples', 'Follows', 'Orders', 'Perpendicular', 'at sea', 'Chuck Woolery's GSN show', 'Little bits', 'Helper', 'Yon maiden', 'Massachusetts cape', 'Taller', 'Before'.

A 10x10 grid for a Cryptoquip puzzle. The grid contains numbers 1-10 in the top row and 12-56 in the rest of the grid, indicating the positions of letters in a hidden message.

CRYPTOQUIP
S B G X C Q I G M S G Q A O A M ' S
I H S G M J H D B Y S C W I Y J M S B G
I C X R C D G , Y J O S D J S W C Q R G A
" Q G S H Q M S J Y C M A G Q . "
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A GUY STUBBORNLY
REFUSED TO LET GO OF HIS METAL SODA CAN,
MIGHT YOU CALL HIM TIN-ACIOUS?
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: A equals D