

Jessore claim kabaddi title

SPORTS REPORTER

Jessore trounced Rajshahi 44-15 to become champions in the Fresh IGP Cup National Youth Kabaddi Championship in the final at the Outer Stadium Kabaddi court yesterday.

Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation president and Inspector General of Bangladesh Police Nur Mohammad was the chief guest at the closing function and distributed the prizes. General Manager of tournament sponsors Meghna Group of Industries Abu Zafar was present as special guest.

Earlier, on way to the final, Rajshahi beat Tangail 24-22 in the first semifinal while Jessore eliminated reigning champions Dhaka 45-36 in the other semifinal.

Footballers

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captain Rajani Kanta Barman also will be late, said Malu adding that two senior players — Matiur Munna and Fereez Mohammad Titu — did not even report to the BFF.

The footballers only returned this week after playing the Nehru Cup and the Merdeka Cup in India and Malaysia respectively.

Coach Hasanuzzaman Babloo accompanied the team while assistant coach Golam Jilani had left Dhaka a day early to make some arrangements.

Malu also informed that head coach Syed Nayeemuddin will return to Dhaka after a short vacation in India. The former Indian coach and international is expected to land in Dhaka this morning from Kolkata by a GMG flight. He will leave for Chittagong also today.

Meanwhile, goalkeeper and national captain Aminul Haque has refused to join the residential camp unless he is officially called.

The acting general secretary of BFF had asked him to enroll officially after coach Nayeemuddin showed his reluctance to include Aminul for missing an entire season through injury.

Ponting

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Ponting said,

"I'm grateful for the support we've both had from Cricket Australia and my teammates, and in particular I'd like to thank (vice-captain) Adam Gilchrist and (coach) Tim Nielsen for their leadership roles in the early days of the Australian squad's first-ever Twenty20 international tour."

"It made things easier here knowing the team was in such good hands."

A decision on whether injured allrounder Shane Watson will join the tour will be announced in South Africa later Friday.

The tournament runs from September 11-24.

He thinks

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Akhtar begged forgiveness from Pakistan's obsessive cricket fans.

"Don't make me a villain. I am a human being and I can also make mistakes. I am sorry for what happened and I hope people will forgive me. I am not a bad human being, it's just that I get angry more often than others," he said.

"I have missed a lot of cricket though injuries and now this has happened. I desperately want to play."

Akhtar also had altercations with former coach Bob Woolmer, including a shouting match during a Test at Port Elizabeth in South Africa in February this year. Then too he was sent home after he ruptured his hamstring.

Woolmer died during Pakistan's first-round exit from the World Cup in the Caribbean in March and was replaced by former Australian fast bowler Geoff Lawson.

Akhtar smacks

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one year, but the bans were overturned.

Akhtar missed the World Cup in the Caribbean due to a knee injury and his comeback was delayed after Pakistan's two one-day matches against Scotland and India were washed out last month.

He has played just four one-day matches and two Tests in the last 19 months.

The Pakistani team has also been mired in controversy.

New coach Lawson is the replacement for Bob Woolmer, the former England batsman found dead in his hotel room in Jamaica after Pakistan crashed out of the World Cup in a first round loss to minnows Ireland earlier this year.

Police initially thought Woolmer had been murdered but later said his death was from natural causes.

In August 2006 Pakistan forfeited the Oval Test match against England, the first time a team had done so in Test history.

The match was declared forfeit by umpires Darrell Hair and Billy Doctrove when the Pakistan players stayed in their dressing room after the tea interval, in protest at a five-run penalty for ball tampering.

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq was later cleared of ball tampering but found guilty of disrepute in relation to the post-tea no-show at the Oval. He was banned for four one-day matches.



National footballers take seat in the team bus at the BFF Bhaban yesterday morning before they set off for Cox's Bazar for the month-long training camp.

Hosts seek recovery

AFP, Johannesburg



On the last occasion South Africa hosted a world cricket event the host country crashed out ignominiously.

Home team captain Graeme Smith will be hoping history doesn't repeat itself in the inaugural ICC Twenty20 World Championship starting at the Wanderers Stadium next Tuesday.

By coincidence, South Africa's tournament-opening match is against the West Indies, the side that first derailed the Proteas' campaign by winning the first game of the 2003 World Cup at Newlands in Cape Town.

It was because of South Africa's failure to advance beyond the group stage in 2003 that Shaun Pollock was fired as captain and Smith took over at the age of 22.

Apart from Smith's aggressive leadership, he will have a key role as a hard-hitting left-handed opening batsman.

He is the highest scorer in the short history of 20-overs internationals, with 259 runs hammered off only 188 balls at an average of 86.33. He has hit three half-centuries in five matches, more than anyone else in the world.

South Africa, though, have won only two of their five matches, even though four of the games have been played at the Wanderers, South Africa's largest stadium.

South Africa's other group opponents are Bangladesh, who gained an upset win over the Proteas in the 50-overs World Cup in the West Indies earlier this year.

Smith has warned that although Twenty20 is traditionally a batsmen's game, conditions could be tricky.

"I'm unsure whether batsmen are going to totally dominate. No one really knows what conditions are going to be like at this time of year," he said.

September is early for big cricket to be played in South Africa and despite intensive efforts, particularly at Newlands where there has been heavy winter rain, pitches may give seam bowlers some help.

South Africa go into the tournament without star all-rounder Jacques Kallis, who was controversially left out of what is generally a young side.

Wicketkeeper Mark Boucher was fined 60 percent of his tournament match fees for criticising his friend Kallis' omission.

There was also controversy about the racial make-up of the

side.

It's understood that the side originally chosen included only five black players but officials insisted that a minimum of seven be picked -- the same number as were in the squad for the World Cup in the West Indies.

A likely casualty of the "quota" was reliable all-rounder Andrew Hall, who last week notified Cricket South Africa that he was quitting international cricket.

Despite the upheavals, South Africa should have a competitive side although the withdrawal through injury of big-hitting Loots Bosman could spike their guns.

Other quick scorers include Herschelle Gibbs, Justin Kemp, Shaun Pollock, Boucher and left-hander Albie Morkel, an all-rounder picked ahead of Hall.

As preparation for the Twenty20, South Africa sent most of the squad to Zimbabwe for three 50-over internationals last month.

The batsmen shone but the bowling was disappointing, with South Africa only managing to bowl out their lowly opponents once in the three matches.

Veterans Pollock and Makhaya Ntini will seek to improve on recent form but Morne Morkel, younger brother of Albie, is a young fast bowler with wicket-taking ability.

Entertain while winning

CRICINFO, undated



Australian fast bowler Brett Lee could hardly

hide his excitement about being back in action when he called Twenty20 "three hours of the most amazing cricket". He will be spearheading Australia's attack in the ICC World Twenty20 after a seven-month layoff from the game.

The quartet of players Australia

trooped out in front of the media in Johannesburg on Thursday -- Michael Clarke, Michael Hussey, Andrew Symonds and Lee -- all indicated it was important to remember the 20-over game was all about entertaining the crowd.

"We need to make sure we adapt to this new tournament as quickly as possible, but the most important thing is this event is attracting a different demographic to cricket," Lee said. "Bearing in mind that Australia haven't come here to finish second, third or fourth, Twenty20 is all about having fun with the crowd. It's three hours of the most amazing cricket with plenty of sixes."

Lee indicated that he would not be looking to cut down on speed or bowl defensively in the tournament.

"The aim is still to get ten wickets, no matter what form of the game," he said.

"If you can get wickets early on, it's definitely going to dent the opposition's run-scoring."

"You need to keep the boundary-scoring down too, but you need a couple of guys who are around 150 kph, using their pace and getting the ball up in the spot. If the batsmen are going for big shots, it does mean you have a better chance of taking a wicket and it doesn't matter if it comes by knocking (down) the stumps or if it's caught on the boundary."

Australia are once again over-

flowing with batting power as they enter the inaugural ICC World Twenty20 as favourites, but Hussey, who had a disappointing World Cup with little opportunity to shine, said he was just chuffed to be part of a winning team.

"I actually thoroughly enjoyed

the West Indies, it was just a pleasure to be with the team and see how well the top four batted and how well the bowlers executed our plans," Hussey said. "I probably won't get a lot of opportunity in this tournament either, but I'm really keen to play and get into a match situation again. I'm sick and tired of it being us closer to them."

Hussey said that Australia would

have to rely on their natural instincts

because they did not have much

experience of Twenty20 cricket.

"You can put a couple of tactical

things in place, but it's best to just let

your instincts take over and trust

your skills," he said.

"We haven't played much of this

format of cricket, so we'll need to get

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5-star Yusuf guides Sena Pally School

SPORTS REPORTER

After their seniors got off to a bright

start in the first round on Thursday, the Sena Pally High School Under-11s recorded a massive 7-0 win over Motijheel Ideal School in the junior section of the Dhaka School Football League yesterday.

Yusuf Kabir was the star of the victory slammimg five goals at the Segun Bagicha School ground while Alim scored twice for the winners.

In other U-11 league matches of the day, Khilgaon Model High School edged Motijheel Government High School 1-0 while Motijheel Government Primary School drew goalless with Al Ahmed High School.

In the U-13 league, Segun Bagicha HS beat Haider Ali HS 1-0, Shahid Nabi HS defeated Kamalapur School by same margin and Khilgaon HS crushed Jatrabari Ideal HS 3-1.

In Thursday's U-11 league, Sakibul Hasan slotted four goals to help Motijheel Government trounce Nidhu Babu Smriti Government Primary School 7-0, Haider Ali HS beat Segun Bagicha 2-1 and Jatrabari Ideal shared points with Khilgaon HS in a 1-1 draw.