

England's SL tour could begin early

AFP, Colombo

The first of England's two winter tours to Sri Lanka will start earlier than planned if they fail to reach the World Twenty20 semi-finals, a senior Sri Lanka Cricket official said Thursday.

"They have asked if we have any objections to their coming early. We have said no objections," the official said.

England were originally scheduled to arrive on September 25 but are now looking at the 22nd.

"This will depend on whether or not England reached the semi-final stage of the World Twenty20," in South Africa, the official said.

The Twenty20 semi-finals take place on the 22nd and the final two days later.

In Sri Lanka, England will play their first three matches of the five-match tour in the central town of Dambulla starting on October 1.

The last two games are scheduled for the capital Colombo ahead of an October 15 departure.

England return to the island in mid-November for a three-match Test series.

KP sets up

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cover boundary.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard in the ICC World Twenty20 Championship match between England and Zimbabwe at Newlands in Cape Town on Thursday:

ENGLAND

Maddy c Matsikenyeri b Chigumbura 14
Prior c Chibhabha b Mupariwa 20
Wright c Taylor b Chigumbura 0
Pietersen c Masakadza b Utseya79
Collingwood run out (Sibanda) 37
Flintoff b Chibhabha 13
Shah c Chibhabha b Chigumbura11
Mascarenhas c Masakadza b Chigumbura 0
Schofield not out 8
Broad run out (Mupariwa) 2
Anderson not out 0
Extras: (lb-1, w-3) 4
Total: (For 9 wkts in 20 overs) 188
Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-20, 3-51, 4-151, 5-154, 6-172, 7-178, 8-178, 9-185

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Chigumbura	4	0	31	4
Brent	3	0	34	0
Mupariwa	2	0	22	1
Utseya	4	0	27	1
Taibu	2	0	20	0
Dabengwa	2	0	29	0
Chibhabha	3	0	24	1

ZIMBABWE
Sibanda c Maddy b Mascarenhas29
Taylor b Mascarenhas 47
Taibu b Mascarenhas 2
Chibhabha c and b Schofield 5
Matsikenyeri c Flintoff b Schofield2
Chigumbura c Wright b Collingwood 8
Masakadza c Wright b Broad 27
Utseya not out 13
Dabengwa not out 0
Extras: (lb-4, w-1) 5

Total: (For 7 wkts in 20 overs) 138
Fall of wickets: 1-74, 2-81, 3-84, 4-87, 5-89, 6-104, 7-137
Did not bat: Brent, Mupariwa

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Broad	4	0	29	1
Anderson	3	0	31	0
Flintoff	3	0	18	0
Mascarenhas	4	0	18	3
Schofield	4	0	15	2
Collingwood	2	0	23	1

Result: England won by 50 runs.
Man-of-the-match: Kevin Pietersen.
Toss: England.
Umpires: Tony Hill and Asad Rauf.

Long-awaited

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disciplinary grounds.

However, despite the fact that both teams will have some new faces, that will definitely not dilute any of the heat that an India-Pakistan match usually generates.

Both teams may have new captains but the importance of this high-voltage clash is definitely not lost on any of them.

"For us, any game against India is very special. My team is working hard and they are keen to go out and give their best against India," said Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik.

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni too was confident that young Indian guns were capable of handling the high pressure match.

Zimbabwe hails

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countries have become increasingly strained and hit a new low in May when Zimbabwe, furious at the cancellation of a cricket tour, accused Canberra of funding "terrorist activities".

The defeat has left the men from Down Under needing to win their remaining group game against England at Newlands on Friday if they are not to go home early.



PHOTO: AFP

Germany forward Lukas Podolski exults after scoring during their friendly win over Romania at the Rhein-Energie Stadion in Cologne on Wednesday. Germany won 3-1.

A win is always a win

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frustrated us but they have got the ability to win international matches. I am excited although it's a Twenty20 match, but remember it's a World Cup match," said Faruque.

"It was fantastic to see that Ashrafu led the side from the front and Aftab finished the game. You all know both the guys are very talented and they can change any game on their day. Our bowling was also fantastic, especially the way Syed Rasel bowled in the match set the tone for the team," explained the former national skipper.

"I think there is hardly any scope to question Ashrafu's ability because he has repeatedly proved it to us through some memorable victories," said Faruque.

Faruque, whose last team selection even earned praises from Australian great Ian Chappell, said that he was also optimistic about the second round matches.

"Now there is no pressure on the team, that's why we can freely play the next group match and the second round games," he added.

His successor Rafiqul Alam also said that he was not surprised by the outcome.

"You see even Ian Chappell considered Bangladesh as a dangerous team in the tournament, so it was not unexpected. It's a very good team," said the new chief of the selection committee.

Interestingly, he had special praise for the Bangladesh captain. "Some of his shots, at times, are as good as those of Sachin Tendulkar," said Rafiq.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the ICC World

Twenty20 Championship match between Bangladesh and the West Indies at the Wanderers in Johannesburg on Thursday:

WEST INDIES
Gayle c Kapali b Rasel 0
Devon Smith b Razzak 51
Chanderpaul c Mashrafe b Razzak 37
Sarwan st Rahim b Shakib Samuels c Shakib b Ashrafu 27
Ramdin c Rahim b Shakib 2
Dwayne Smith b Shakib 29
Dwayne Bravo st Rahim b Shakib2
Powell not out 1
Extras: (lb-2, w-8) 10
Total: (For 8 wkts in 20 overs) 164
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-95, 3-104, 4-126, 5-131, 6-155, 7-157, 8-164
Did not bat: Rampaul, Edwards

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rasel	4	1	10	1
Razzak	4	0	25	2
Mashrafe	2	0	16	0
Reza	2	0	22	0
Shakib	4	0	34	4
Ashrafu	4	0	55	1

BANGLADESH

Iqbal c Chanderpaul b Rampaul 10

Nazimuddin c Sarwan b Rampaul1
Aftab not out 62
Ashrafu c Gayle b Sarwan 61
Shakib c Powell b Sarwan 13
Kapali not out 5
Extras: (lb-4, w-8, nb-1) 13
Total: (For 4 wkts in 18 overs) 165
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-28, 3-137, 4-159
Did not bat: Reza, Rahim, Mashrafe, Rasel, Razzak

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	3	0	28	0
Rampaul	4	0	35	2
Gayle	4	0	21	0
Edwards	3	0	33	0
Bravo	2	0	34	0
Sarwan	2	0	10	2

Result: Bangladesh won by six wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Mohammad Ashrafu.

Toss: Bangladesh.

Umpires: Mark Benson and Nigel Long.

STEST FIFTIES IN TWENTY20 INTERNATIONALS

Balls faced	Player	Opposition	Venue	Year
20	M Ashrafu (BD)	West Indies	Johannesburg	2007
23	S Jayasuriya (SL)	New Zealand	Wellington	2006
25	ASymonds (Aus)	South Africa	Brisbane	2006
25	MSamuels (WI)	England	London	2007
25	Nazimuddin (BD)	Pakistan	Nairobi	2007
26	C Gayle (WI)	South Africa	Johannesburg	2007
27	LBosman (SA)	Pakistan	Johannesburg	2007
29	PCollingwood (Eng)	West Indies	London	2007
29	C Gayle (WI)	England	London	2007
30	D Smith (WI)	England	London	2007

Barry aims for regular place

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from thigh problems for the clashes with Estonia at home and Russia away next month.

But Barry admitted: 'I hope I've done enough to stay in the manager's plans. You wait for your chance and when it comes you try and seize it.'

'I've had to wait so long because there are so many quality players around. I've done myself no harm and I look forward to meeting up again hopefully.'

'It's been something different for me really. To play back-to-back qualifiers at Wembley doesn't come around too often.'

'I've waited a long time to get my chance and I've certainly enjoyed the last two games. It was nice to come in for two great performances from all the lads.'

Steven Gerrard has been quick to praise the performances of Barry - frozen out for lengthy spells during Sven-Goran Eriksson's reign - and the Villa man was quick to reciprocate about the influence of the Liverpool midfielder.

He said: 'To come in and play alongside someone like Steven, one of the best midfielders in the

world, can make your job easier and we are good friends off the pitch as well, going back to Euro 2000.'

'I knew my role and I knew international football. You can get a lot of the ball in the holding role and I was happy with the way the two games went.'

Barry, whose cross set up the crucial opening goal for Michael Owen, believes England can be well satisfied with their week's work which has put their qualification destiny back in their own hands.

He said: 'We knew there was a lot of pressure building up because of the position in the group we were in but we've got the six points and scored six goals - and you can't ask for much more than that.'

'We performed well against Israel but we knew we were going to have to raise our game against the Russians. The way we started the game and took the game to them was great but it was a relief to us when we went 2-0 up.'

'At 1-0 there were a couple of nervy moments. There was the disallowed goal and then they had a good chance straight after half-time which would have made it harder for us had it gone in.'

'But if you're going to succeed, you're going to need that bit of luck sometimes as well.'

Ironically, Barry's next action will be against Eriksson when Villa tackle Manchester City at Eastlands on Sunday.

He has always kept private his thoughts about the Swede, who never started with him during his five-and-a-half years as England coach, but admitted he never gave up hope of eventually winning a recall.

Barry said: 'I felt I was good enough to play for my country and, although I've played in the Premier League for nearly nine years now, age was also on my side.'

'It does come into your head every once in a while that your international career is probably over but I never stopped believing I could play for England again.'

'You can never give up and just have to keep putting your name in the shake-up by playing as well as you can and I'm just happy Steve McClaren has given me an opportunity. I hope I've given him another option.'

Scot shocker for France

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won 2-1 in Ukraine, and two points ahead of France with just the top two teams qualifying for the finals next year.

Italy, who drew 0-0 in France on Saturday, kept on course with their victory over the Ukraine thanks to two goals from Udinese striker Antonio Di Natale, who was preferred in place of Alessandro Del Piero. Ukraine captain Shevchenko scored for the hosts.

The Italians should win at home against Georgia on October 13 and the Faroe Islands on November 21, meaning in theory a draw would be enough in Scotland on November 17 to put them through.

England's 3-0 win over Russia has given Steve McClaren's under-pressure side a huge qualifying boost.

A first-half double from Michael Owen and a late strike from Rio Ferdinand lifted England above the Russians and into second place in Group E, making them firm favourites to reach next year's finals alongside group leaders Croatia.

Russia had offered an early warning that they would offer a tougher test than Israel had on Saturday when their captain, Andrey Arshavin, skipped round Ferdinand with ease and forced Gareth Barry — tracking back diligently as he was to do all night — into an important near-post interception.

But McClaren's faith in the line-up that had beaten the Israelis 3-0 was to be rewarded.

Wales have no chance of going through from Group D, their 5-2 thrashing of Slovakia in Trnava gave

something more for Britain to cheer, with Craig Bellamy scoring twice.

Spain also took a big step towards booking their place in the finals with a 2-0 victory over Latvia.

Xavi opened the scoring in the 13th minute at Oviedo while Liverpool striker Fernando Torres capped the win with an 86th minute strike.

Spain are now top of group F with Sweden, who have played a match less.

Portugal meanwhile were stunned by a late equalizer from Serbia after Simao had opened the scoring in the 11th minute, leaving Portugal third in group A behind Poland and Finland.

Kapil welcomes BCCI's league

CRICINFO, undated

Kapil Dev, the chairman of the Indian Cricket League's (ICL) executive board, has welcomed the Indian board's plans of launching an international Twenty20 leagues.

"If the board has decided that, I'm proud and happy that they endorse our view about Twenty20 cricket," Kapil said at a press conference in Chennai where the ICL camp is going on. "There's nothing wrong with them coming. Competition is good. Good luck to them."

Kapil said the ICL was not trying to fight the Board of Control for Cricket in India and its aim was simply to improve the standard of cricket in the country.

"I am not bothered by monopoly or anything. I have to look after my home. If you don't disturb me, if you allow me to run my ICL, I'll be happy."

He also promised to soon reveal big names that had signed on with the ICL.

Kapil said ICL's administration would be an open one — with everything, including selection, put live on television. "The time has come when people want to be more and more involved, so it's all going to be in the open. Some things, the committee might not want to televise, but 90 per cent will be in the open."

Khilgaon slam six past Ideal

SPORTS REPORTER

Khilgaon High School drubbed Ideal School & College 6-0 in the Under-13 School Football League at their ground yesterday.

Isena Palli High School defeated Dhammarajik High School 3-1 at the Basabo Club ground while Ali Ahmed High School played out a goalless draw with Haider Ali High School in the other matches.

In the Under-11 matches, Jatrabari Ideal High School beat Motijheel Government Boys High School 3-1 at the Motijheel Government Boys High School ground, Khilgaon High School edged past Nidhu Smriti Government Primary School 1-0 at the Khilgaon Model School ground while the match between Shaheed Nabi High School and Segun Bagicha High School ended in a 2-2 draw at the Segun Bagicha High School ground.

Local pair move to 2nd round

SPORTS REPORTER

Shew Shew and Rashedul of Bangladesh reached the second round of the Prime Bank Asian Under-14 Tennis tournament when they beat Kishore-Lakhotia pair of India 7-5, 6-3 in the boys doubles event at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday.

In the day's other matches, Maksudul-Jobayer and Hasinul-Sabbir pair won their respective doubles matches.

Indian players dominated the boy's singles as Bishit Rohit, Lakhotia Raghav, Mayur Mohit, Thakkar Rakshay, Goghari Aashman and Bishit Ronit won their respective matches besides Khurram Faizan of Pakistan and Tachi Ryohto of Japan.

Malik Arzoo, Hegde Riddhi and VKC Vishesh of India won their respective matches in the girls' singles event.

There's more

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complete adventure, hooking, flicking and driving - while Aftab Ahmed played a perfect anchor role, even if his unbeaten 62 off 49 balls suggests he was more explosive.

This tournament has achieved what the ICC has been trying to do for years, made every team competitive.

Ashrafu backs this up: "We have been beating big teams regularly over the last year and when people say it is an upset or a one-off it doesn't make sense. We have made the Super Eights in two big tournaments this year and it is about time they stop calling us a minnow. There is more to come from Bangladesh."

Bangladesh will make the semi-finals, you read it here first.

Still have any

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so reluctant to embrace Twenty20 cricket that they have yet to host an international match.

Domestic Twenty20 cricket was introduced in England in 2003 to boost dwindling viewership. Indian officials say cricket-mad Asian nations have never faced such a problem.

Cynics, however, blame the lack of interest on commercial reasons. After all, a full-scale one-day international allows 100 overs of advertising breaks as opposed to just 40 overs for a Twenty20 game.

All that could change at the end of the two-week world championships. Twenty20 cricket rocks. Ask the fans.

BCCI replies with IPL



AFP, New Delhi

Indian cricket authorities on Thursday paraded superstars Glenn McGrath and Stephen Fleming at the launch of international and domestic Twenty20 leagues to counter a rival group.

The Indian Premier League (IPL) will be made up of franchised teams under the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), vice-president Lalit Modi told reporters here.

The board also announced an international Champions Twenty20 League featuring top two clubs from Australia, South Africa, England and India.

Each of the eight teams will play in domestic competitions in Australia, England, South Africa and India, with the top two sides making it to the Champions League.

The Champions tournament, devised on the lines of the Champions football league, will be a nine-day affair and played in two divisions in October next year. It will feature 12 group matches, semi-finals and final.

The Champions League carries a prize money of five million dollars, while the Indian league offers three

million dollars.

India's famed veterans Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble and Sourav Ganguly were also present at the glitzy announcement in a posh hotel in the Indian capital.

The BCCI is embroiled in a bitter row with rival Indian Cricket League (ICL), which is due to start in October after signing up international and domestic cricketers for a Twenty20 tournament of its own.

With the inaugural ICC World Twenty20 Championship underway in South Africa, the BCCI has swiftly embraced the new form of the game which it had largely ignored until the ICL emerged in April with an ambitious plan to break the mould.

Fleming was axed as New Zealand Test captain on Wednesday after a decade in favour of one-day skipper Daniel Vettori, while former Australian paceman McGrath quit international cricket this year with 563 wickets in 124 Tests.

Their presence was supported by cricket officials from most the Test nations as well as Ray Mail, president of the International Cricket Council.

Retired Australian spinner Shane Warne also confirmed his association with the new leagues, said Modi.

"The ICC fully supports the initiative of the BCCI in launching an Indian Premier League and the Champions Twenty20 League in

conjunction with the boards of Australia, South Africa and England," Mail said.

"Twenty20 is the way to go. It will not interfere with either Test or one-day cricket."

Indian cricket chief Sharad Pawar said the new initiative would not only alter the course of Indian cricket, but also of world cricket.

"The new leagues will give tremendous stability to players who have devoted their entire lives to the game," he said.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) welcomed the news of the T20 Champions League which will offer counties from England and Wales a chance to compete.

ECB chief executive David Collier said: "ECB is delighted and congratulates BCCI on launching the Indian Premier League to complement the domestic competitions run by ECB, Cricket South Africa and Cricket Australia."

"For County, State and Province players the introduction of the T20 Champions competition played between the eight best teams in the world who have earned their place through our domestic competitions provides a new and exciting pinnacle for our County champions."

'Aussies were complacent'



AFP, Sydney

Former Australian captain Ian Chappell said Ricky Ponting's side was complacent and lacked respect for its opposition Thursday after a shock loss to minnows Zimbabwe in the ICC World Twenty20 Championship.

Australia's World Cup and Test champions limped to 138 for nine in the opening match of their campaign in South Africa, only for Zimbabwe to overhaul the total with one ball to spare in a thrilling match.

Chappell, a gritty Australian captain in the 1970s who never lost a Test series as skipper, said Ponting's side could not use a long lay-off from the game as an excuse.

"I think it's more likely the Aussies were complacent than

rusty," Chappell told the CricInfo website.

Chappell said the Australians had played plenty of practice matches in the lead-up to the tournament opener and Ponting would be disappointed his players did not treat their unfancied opponents with more respect.

"I think there could have been a feeling of 'all we've got to do is turn up and we'll beat Zimbabwe'," he said.

"I think that's what Ricky Ponting was alluding to when he said after the game that his players need to respect the (Twenty20) game a little."

Chappell said Ponting probably delivered a "tongue lashing" to his team after the loss.

He also warned Australia's next opponents, England, to expect a backlash.

"England will need to watch out when Australia play them because they'll be wounded," he said.

McFadden looks to qualification

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will be the best night I've had.

"We have got some big games coming up so hopefully we can carry it on. But obviously it's great result, one of the best in most of the players' careers."

McFadden's goal came out of the blue and the former Motherwell player insisted pure instinct took over when he latched on to goal-keeper Craig Gordon's clearance and let fly from 30 yards.

He said: "I took a touch, turned round and decided I would have a go. I don't think there was any decision to make, you just do it and think about it later."

"The balls were flying around in training and so I thought that if I got the chance then I would shoot. As soon as I hit it I saw the keeper scramble a little bit."

"He got a touch but thankfully it went in and we got the result."

And although McFadden could not contain his joy at the shock result, the 24-year-old insisted there is still plenty of work to do if the Scots are to book their ticket to Austria and Switzerland.

"They are one of the best teams in the world and we've managed to beat them" he added. "It's fantastic but the job is only half-done."

"We need to knuckle down and

for the next three games and try and take maximum points. But the game against France hammered home that we have got a chance."

The French left the stadium reeling from the defeat which left them in third place and with qualification now out of their hands.

Striker David Trezeguet, however, insisted that the group is far from over.

"Scotland were concentrating on their defence and had just one opportunity but they scored from it," he said. "But there are still three games to go."

Have respect for it: Ricky

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Symonds st