



NOTHING CAN STOP HIM: Likhon (R) of Tokai Stadium goes on the offensive against Tokai Mirpur during the Tokai kabaddi final at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday. The young boy, who lost one hand, picks loose papers in the stadium area.

Sonali ride on Haider 6-for

SPORTS REPORTER

Haider Ali bowled Sonali Metro Cricket Academy to a 106-run victory over ACC Blue in a Third Division Qualifying match at the Gulshan Youth Club ground yesterday.

Haider grabbed six wickets for 22 to bowl ACC Blue out for only 96. Sonali Metro scored 202 in 40 overs with Minhazul contributing with 45.

Alfar Cricket Foundation and Dhamondri Cricket Kids were the other winners on the day.

Akhtar set for India tour

CRICINFO, undated

Nasim Ashraf, the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, has asked Shoaib Akhtar to fulfil his role as a senior player and prove his critics wrong with a forceful performance during the tour of India, which begins in the first week of November.

National selector Saleem Jaffer, who followed Shoaib's progress in a domestic match, cleared him for selection and the fast bowler was likely to be included in the squad for the five-ODI and three-Test series in India.

"The tour of India is certainly the most important assignment for our team and is perhaps even more important than the World Cup," Ashraf told the News. "I expect that all the players, including Shoaib Akhtar, would be at their best behaviour and give 100%."

"I hope that Shoaib will be a changed man on the tour of India," Ashraf said. "It is his last chance and we all hope that this time he would not waste it. He also has a point to prove and should give his best to silence his critics who believe he is a spent force."

The fourth ODI between Pakistan and South Africa in Multan marks the end of Shoaib's 13-match ban for a number of breaches of discipline, including a dressing-room spat with Mohammad Asif before the World Twenty20 in South Africa. He will be available for selection for the final ODI in Lahore on October 29.

BCCI get

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with cricket managers.

The matter of appointing a new coach for the team was put on hold after the BCCI's decision in choosing Graham Ford backfired when the South African turned down the offer in June after initially accepting it.

Then the BCCI decided to invite applications for the job, but despite receiving more than a dozen of CVs, preferred to play the waiting game till the end of the series against Australia.

The meeting of the special committee, headed by BCCI chief Sharad Pawar and comprising the Board's principal office-bearers along with ex-Test captains Srinivas Venkataraghavan, Sunil Gavaskar and Ravi Shastri, is to be held two days before India's opening ODI against Pakistan at Guwahati.

Shah said the BCCI officials would also utilise the opportunity to hold discussions with newly-appointed director of the National Cricket Academy, Dav Whatmore, over the academy's setup.

Clark does a McGrath

Cricket

PTI, Sydney

Australian seamer Stuart Clark has predicted that Australia would blank the visiting Indian cricket team 4-0 in the upcoming Test series.

The lanky fast-medium bowler, thus, carried on the tradition of the great Glenn McGrath who had a habit of making such pre-series predictions.

Clark said Australia would win all the six home Tests to be played this summer, including the two against Sri Lanka.

"It's going to be a great summer with Sri Lanka and India coming out," Clarke said at the series launch here. "And hopefully, the fans can come out and support us and we can bring home 4-0 and 2-0 series wins." When quizzed further on the prospect of a series white-wash against both India and Sri Lanka, Clark said: "I have just predicted 4-0 and 2-0."

McGrath, who retired after Australia's World Cup triumph in the West Indies earlier this year, used to make stunning pre-series predictions in his 124 Test career.

To the delight of cricket fans, he would also declare who was his "bunny" each series and, more often than not, take their wicket at least once.

The last time India toured Australia, Brett Lee was made largely ineffective by the Indian top order but the speedster says he had "forgotten" that experience and was ready to lock horns with the tourists once again.

In the 2003-04 series which ended in a 1-1 draw, Sachin Tendulkar, Rahul Dravid, VVS Laxman, Sourav Ganguly and Virender Sehwag averaged more than 50 runs.

Lee was thrust into the role of the leader of the bowling attack in the absence of Glenn McGrath and Shane Warne but his two Tests produced the unflattering return of eight wickets for 476 runs at a cost of 59.50 each.

"I actually had forgotten about that until now, so thanks for bringing it up," Lee said when asked if revenge may motivate his efforts this summer.

The fast bowler rated the Indian top order the biggest challenge to the usual suspects and wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni -- "probably the hardest hitter of the ball I've ever seen in my life, a guy who can clear the pickets at will" -- as the main threats.

"They're great batsmen to bowl against and, if you want to improve your cricket, you always put yourself against the best and that's the Indian batsmen," Lee told "The Age".

"We've definitely got our work cut out but we have got a great side," Lee said while acknowledging a huge hole at the heart of the Australian side this year.

"In the hard Test matches, we've always thought we can turn to Glenn McGrath or turn to Shane Warne to try to take a wicket and actually get that breakthrough," he said.

Raving, ranting won't do

Cricket

HARSHA BHOGLE

At some point the fork in the path appears before every sportsman. Does he play to the gallery? Or does he play to his strength? In the movies and in slapstick, and occasionally in politics, the two paths might seem to merge. In the more real world of sport, the competitor must choose. It might seem an easy choice on the face of it, surely to win you must play to your strength, but the more you look around the more you realise that there are takers for either path.

I think some of India's players chose the gallery to their strength in the games against Australia. They were seen to be aggressive but that isn't the same thing as being aggressive. I think the drama descended to being childish sometimes but worse still, in trying to create the illusion of aggression, a couple of young men didn't quite play to their strengths.

They gave television channels a lot of footage and used up a lot of newsprint. Instead, they could have given their side a better chance of winning. Sport is best played when the mind is calm and the intent is aggressive. It is a very rare sportsman that can rave and rant and focus on the job at hand.

John McEnroe might come to mind and for all his genius there is a school of thought that believes he underperformed. And Glenn McGrath's mind was calm more often than when the whirlwind blew through it. The most aggressive Indian cricketers I have known are Kapil Dev, Sachin Tendulkar and Anil Kumble and between the three of them I cannot remember one instance where the opponent had to be taunted, where the finger had to be wagged, for a result. They could play and they won matches for India.

And so it worries me that some wonderfully gifted young men believe that being rude and demonstrative is the path, or indeed the essential ingredient, to success.

Zaheer Khan learnt it the hard way and when we were in England the most noticeable aspect of his cricket was how relaxed he seemed in his delivery stride. There was a calm about him that allowed him to send the ball where he wanted it to go. When you beat the bat or get the batsman out you don't have to tell him you have won.

He knows. But Zaheer needed time in the wilderness to understand himself. He realised that the ball speaks a thousand words and it is something that a Sreesanth or a Harbhajan must understand. Cricket is unlike other reality shows where singers must know how to dance to win and judges must learn to be rude. That is scripted mayhem, it produces a fleeting acquaintance with fame and success; even those two qualities, as we now learn from the glamour pages, aren't always related.

Sreesanth must learn to bowl five great outswingers in an over, Harbhajan must tease and tempt and torment.

(Popular commentator Harsha Bhogle wrote this piece on Indian Express website).

Murali takes a blow!

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Australia only a week ago, and South Australian leg-spinner Cullen Bailey, who is sidelined by the return to fitness of paceman Shaun Tait.

Sangakkara and captain Mahela Jayawardene are the pivotal members of Sri Lanka's batting order.

A wicketkeeper for 48 of his 67 Tests, Sangakkara, 30, has relinquished the gloves to concentrate on his batting.

Sangakkara's average of better than 54, with 14 centuries, including six double hundreds, is better than any other Sri Lankan batsman to have played more than one Test.

But in his 19 Tests without the gloves, he has averaged a phenomenal 89.4 with six hundreds and 11 half-centuries.

"Statistics show I have been batting pretty well when I've not kept, but then again statistics show a lot of things," he said.

"I enjoy doing both jobs, but we have a great wicketkeeper in Prasanna Jayawardene as well, so

we haven't lost anything. We've just gained a really great player into the side."

That wasn't always the case with Jayawardene, 28, who has played only 12 Tests in eight years. After six of those Tests, he had a batting average of three.

But Jayawardene has improved markedly over the past two years with the bat, scoring an unbeaten 120 in the most recent series against Bangladesh, which Sri Lanka won 3-0.

Like Jayawardene the day before, Sangakkara played down any concerns about Australian crowds or problems with player aggression following Australia's nasty one-day tour of India.

"We're not Indians," Sangakkara said in a wonderful moment of deadpan humour.

"That's a separate tour. We can't control how they were accepted and how we're looked at by crowds."

"We're there to put on a spectacle for people to enjoy and respect and watch."

"I watched the Indian series and there was a lot of talk about what happened in the middle and the crowds getting involved."

"When it comes up, we've always had a good relationship with the Australian side in past years."

"We're looking to build on that, but whatever happens with the crowds we can't control."

"I don't think our guys go over the top. We've been a side that plays good, tough cricket but we haven't got any characters who go over the top and try and take away from the game."

"Especially in that Indian series it was a tough series, there was a lot of pressure on both sides so sometimes tempers can spill over."

"The key thing is when you walk away from the game you leave it on the field and you can go away and have a drink with the opposition."

"That's what the game is all about in the end."

Mirpur clinch Tokai Kabaddi

UNB, Dhaka

Tokai Mirpur emerged champions in the Orient Bread Tokai Kabaddi competition, when they beat Tokai Stadium 61-44 with three creditable lonas in the final at the Kabaddi Stadium yesterday.

Tokai Khilgaon finished third with a 43-34 victory over Tokai Gulistan.

Mohammad Likon from the runners-up team was adjudged best player of the tournament.

After the final, sponsor Orient Bread's managing director Mahbubuzzaman distributed prizes as chief guest.

Nothing special for Murali

AFP, Sydney

Cricket Australia on Friday denied introducing special security measures to protect Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralidaran from crowds Down Under, saying existing measures would catch any offenders.

Muralidaran arrived this week for his first full Australia Test tour in 12 years, braced for a chilly reception from fans as he bids to break local hero Shane Warne's Test wicket record.

His arrival on Wednesday raised eyebrows when a federal police officer escorted him through the media throng in Adelaide, unusual in laid-back Australia, where England players last year often mingled freely with fans.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported Friday that plainclothes security officers would be sent to sections of Australian grounds near Muralidaran's fielding positions to swiftly identify and eject trouble-makers.

There are fears the Sri Lankan could receive unsportsmanlike treatment in Australia, where he has been called for "throwing" on two previous tours and subjected to constant crowd calls of "no ball".

Sensitivities about crowd behaviour in Australia are particularly high after the recent one-day series in India, when the only black player in the Australian side, Andrew Symonds, was subjected to racist chants.

The Sri Lankan boycotted a 2004 tour to Australia, because of constant crowd abuse about his bowling action -- and Australian Prime Minister John Howard's assertion that he was a "chucker".

Cricket Australia said its existing crowd monitoring program, introduced after South African players were racially abused two years ago, would protect Muralidaran.

"There's not a specific Muralidaran protection program," Cricket Australia public affairs manager Peter Young told AFP.

"But we have a national program to ensure that we have a family friendly environment in cricket, and as part of that we do have plainclothes people in crowds."

"We (also) have closed circuit television and any spectator who subjects a player to inappropriate behaviour will be detected and ejected very, very quickly."

"Murali" needs just nine wickets to overhaul Warne's 708 Test scalps in the Test matches in Brisbane and Hobart starting on November 8 and 16.

Mashud nears

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Wicketkeeper-batsman Anwar took his first half-century this season with the help of seven boundaries in 117 balls. After lunch, leg-spinner Alok Kapali had Shamsur caught by Tapash Baisya for 30, ending an 84-run stand for the second wicket. Anwar fell soon after for 54, also to Kapali.

But Dhaka has a strong middle-order and this came to the fore when the experienced Al Shahrir and Mehrab Hossain made sure that Dhaka had no further damage. Al Shahrir followed Anwar's mark as he also reached his first 50 of the season, in 93 balls with seven sweetly-timed fours.

Mehrab continued his good form as he reached 49 at stumps, with Mohammad Ashraf's replacement Marshall Ayub, unbeaten on 15. The two Dhaka youngsters have so far added 43 for the fifth wicket.

Apart from Kapali's two wickets, Nazmul and Imtiaz took one each.

BRIEF SCORES

RAJSHAH: First innings 187-5 in 90 overs (Jahurul 4, Rabiul 1, Rafique 13, Naem 0, Mashud 86, Mushfiqur 67, Anisur Rahman 0, Talha 2-34, Sajidul 2-43, Arafat 1-48).

DHAKA: First innings 237-4 in 91 overs (Javed 1, Anwar 54, Shamsur 30, Al Shahrir 54, Mehrab 49, Marshall 15, Nazmul 1-29, Kapali 2-34, Imtiaz 1-10).

Shakib slams

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SCORES IN BRIEF
KHULNA: First Innings: 361 for 7 in 90 overs (Sadat 15, Kayes 52, Bashir 22, Tushar 51, Shakib 108, Shahgir 47, Mashrafe 21, Salim 10, Ashiqur, Ziaur 4 not out, extras 31; Shoukat 3-71, Sajju 3-73, Ehsanul 1-57).

'Woolmer was strangled'

Cricket

AFP, Kingston

Pathologist Ere Seshiah, who performed the autopsy on Pakistan cricket coach Bob Woolmer, told the inquest into Woolmer's death on Thursday that he believed another person was involved.

In his second day of testimony, the controversial Indian-born Seshiah said cell phone photos taken by doctor Asher Cooper when he arrived to administer emergency treatment to Woolmer supported that opinion.

"After viewing the cellular phone pictures taken by Dr. Cooper, I think definitely that there was a third party (in the room)," Seshiah said.

Woolmer died on March 18, when he was found unconscious in his Jamaican hotel room the day after his Pakistan side were embarrassed by minnows Ireland in the cricket World Cup.

When authorities announced they were treating his death as

murder, it sparked feverish speculation that it was related to corruption in international cricket.

In June, Jamaican police said that further investigation had indicated that Woolmer died of natural causes. That was the finding of three overseas pathologists who reviewed Seshiah's findings -- Nathaniel Cary of Britain, Michael Pollanen of Canada and Lorna Martin of South Africa.

All three have testified that in their opinions Woolmer died of natural causes, probably related to heart disease, and all three have said Seshiah's post mortem procedure was flawed.

Seshiah hit back on Thursday at the "unusual and unacceptable" review procedure, saying Cary's opinion is not final and should not be taken into consideration, while Martin gave her findings without seeing the histology and toxicology reports.

He said the position in which Woolmer was found, lying on his back with his head under the toilet bowl, indicated another person in the room.

"In my opinion, it is not possible for the disease to put him in such a position, this definitely speaks to a third party," he said.

He said he didn't know if the reviewing pathologists had seen the same pictures.

He also addressed the fact that the other pathologists disagreed with his conclusion that the hyoid bone in Woolmer's neck was broken.

While Seshiah noted an abnormality in the structure during the autopsy, he admitted that an X-ray showed it might not, in fact, have been broken.

"But even if there is no fracture of the hyoid bone, I stand by my opinion," said Seshiah, who is also of the opinion that Woolmer also was weakened by pesticide poisoning.

"Woolmer died from asphyxia due to manual strangulation, associated with cypermethrin poisoning," Seshiah testified.

The inquest, presided over by coroner Patrick Murphy and 11 jurors, is expected to last until early November.

Laying new markers

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

For the final three years of his term as Australia's coach John Buchanan felt his main role was setting out markers for training and collecting them when it was over. Six months after his final engagement with the team at the World Cup he can't even do that.

Buchanan is at the Gabba, his right arm in a sling, as he prepares to manage an orientation-to-coaching programme that forms part of his new but familiar life. There will be no lucrative overseas posting as a reward for his groundbreaking global achievements, which ended after his second World Cup success. Instead his hands are wrapped firmly around the task of helping coaches and children, although the same grip does not always apply to his bike handlebars.

The previous week he took a corner too fast while cycling and his elbow and ribs thudded into the ground, cracking with the impact. While it makes him grimace at times, the pain does not stop him from gliding between groups of adults as they complete skill drills designed to give children an interest in cricket.

Watching novices fail to complete basic activities is an immeasurable change from fine-tuning the world's finest squad, but Buchanan is comfortable with the intensity drop. He decided after the

Ashes loss in 2005 that he would exit at the 2007 World Cup and doesn't regret stepping down.

"I sat up initially and watched a Twenty20 game in South Africa," he says. "It was to get a bit of a feeling for the game and also to assess did I really want to be there. The answer was clearly no." He had been in charge for more than seven years.

Back at home in Brisbane he has accepted assignments that range from speaking to corporate groups, writing a book that is due for release soon, and being an ambassador for Cricket Coaches Australia and the Australian Sports Commission. They are more relaxed roles and Buchanan is moving more easily without international stress. As he works with the ungainly group he laughs freely, instigates banter and shouts encouragement like it was his gang. It is a different face to the serious one that turned up to deflect questions after Australia's poor days.

Buchanan believes he is returning to anonymity, where he will be able to focus on the kind of programmes that helped him step towards state coaching and, eventually, the national job in 1999. "When I started I was John Who and I guess I'll be John Who again," he says. Like his comment about being the man who merely put out markers, he is underplaying his achievements.

Of course everyone knows he was working with players who were already exceptional, but his unorthodoxy pushed them to levels that were previously unattainable.

Australia won 77% of Tests under Buchanan and the record may develop into a coach's version of Bradman's batting average.

Buchanan could travel anywhere and spread his sometimes convoluted words to other nations, but has chosen to give back to the game that allowed his methods a chance. Educating and training coaches, from those in the community to the high-performance managers in all sports, are some of his new goals. Helping children become more active is another.

"I'm a very firm believer in the business of providing kids with an active and fun-filled environment," he says. "Our social organisation at the moment means kids are less exposed to physical activity than when I was growing up. There's a decline in physical education provision in primary schools. Coaching and coaching activities can play a significant role in children's development." Some of his former internationals were prone to teenage outbursts, but swapping elite athletes for more genuine babies is a "hoble" act for such a qualified practitioner.

Until his arm heals Buchanan won't be able to be hands-on and his managing duties will be similar to his role with Australia. Telling Ricky Ponting to tighten his grip on the bat wasn't his specialty; challenging his players to find ways to improve individually and as a team was. Now the same techniques will be used in his growing business of coaching coaches.

Lamps sings Drogba praises

Football

AFP, London

Frank Lampard described Didier Drogba as the best striker in the world on Wednesday and urged the Ivory Coast international to remain at Chelsea.

Drogba stunned the Blues last week when he announced that he wanted to follow former coach Jose Mourinho out of Stamford Bridge.

But Drogba, who scored 33 goals last season, later said he regretted making his comments public and reaffirmed his commitment to Chelsea's cause.

Since then Drogba scored in their win over Middlesbrough in the Premier League and again in Wednesday night's victory over Schalke 04 in the Champions League.

But Lampard, who has yet to commit his long-term future to the club, insists it is important Chelsea hang on to Drogba.

The England international said: "He's the best, it's as simple as that. There are different types of player - Wayne Rooney is a world-class player who comes out and creates and scores. As an out-and-out striker, there's no-one better than Didier."

"His all-round game: pace, power, team player, scores goals with his head and his feet. He's the best I've played with."

"He's a great lad to have in the dressing room and always fights to the end. The way he's played in the last 18 months, there's no-one better in world football."

"It's very important (to keep him) because players like Didier you want beside you. He makes his decisions but when he's here playing for us, even with all the controversy that's been around for the last week, his performances show what he is all about."

Drogba's deft header gave Chelsea a 2-0 victory over Schalke and kept them top of Group B.

The Blues had gone ahead in the fourth minute through Florent Malouda and there were clear signs of a distinct shift towards a more attacking style of football.

New coach Avram Grant is determined to get Chelsea winning with flair but accepts it will take time to complete the change from the more gritty template adopted by Mourinho in his later days.

But Lampard added: "People are looking for reasons to say we are playing with more freedom because they want to say Chelsea were boring but now they are entertaining."

"That's just a load of talk. We want to win, play to win - if that means good football it means good football but there is a fine line between playing with freedom and overplaying."

"We have to make sure we don't do the wrong things and make sure

we are doing the right things."

"There are changes, every manager has different ideas - the overall aim is to win games so we are all fighting in the same direction. Results have shown that over the last few days. So we've moved on a bit."

Lampard's England international colleague Joe Cole insists he is happy to play with more freedom under the style Grant, and his assistants Henk ten Cate and Steve Clarke, have introduced.

Cole declared: "There's a definite shift in the style of play, especially the forwards, and myself. It's important we are picking up wins while we are adjusting."

"We are learning new positions and looking at a new style of play. I feel we are going to get better and learn the style. We seem to have more of the ball."

"I'm listening and learning and trying to take in everything I can. I love my football so that is all I can do. A new style of play and a new challenge."

"There are definite changes and you were starting to see them against Schalke, we had a lot of the ball."

"A new manager comes in with a new style and you have to adjust. We're picking up points at the moment which is good. I'm enjoying working with the new manager."

SA make it 2-2

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SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the fourth one-day international between Pakistan and South Africa at the Multan Stadium on Friday:

PAKISTAN	
Hameed c Gibbs b Pollock	10
Afridi c Nel b Ntini	0
Younis Khan c Gibbs b Nel	82
Yousuf run out	5
Malik c Smith b Kallis	45
Misbahul c Boucher b Nel	7
Akmal c Pollock b Botha	28
Rehman b Morkel	31
Iftekhar not out	2
Gul c Ntini b Botha	1
Asif not out	19
Extras: (lb-13, nb-1, w-5)	