

## Brad does not worry Mahela

CRICINFO, undated

Mahela Jayawardene has played down Brad Hogg as a potential Test threat as Australia's selectors prepare to choose the team for the first Test at the Gabba. Hogg has been in one-day mode all year but returned to first-class cricket with eight wickets in a Man-of-the-Match effort for Western Australia against Victoria.

Jayawardene said Hogg's success in ODI cricket -- he has 144 wickets at 26.76 -- could not be seen as an indication of how he would perform if chosen ahead of Stuart MacGill in the Test team. "That's mainly because in the one-day game you're trying to play a lot of shots against him and create more opportunities," Jayawardene told the Australian.

"That's when he's pretty aggressive because of his variation, but in the long version you probably have much more time. If you're patient enough I'm sure he'll drop a few loose ones to you so you can help yourself."

Jayawardene said Hogg was probably one of the top ten spinners in the world but he was most dangerous in limited-overs games. "He's a decent spinner," Jayawardene said. "But how you play Hogg in one-day cricket and how you play Hogg in Test cricket is going to be totally different."

Hogg bowled 31.3 overs in two innings and grabbed 8 for 83 as Western Australia beat Victoria in a match that finished at the MCG on Monday. He gave the batsmen few if any loose balls and said it was easy to make the switch back to the longer form of the game. "You can't really think about it, just try and keep it on a good length and try and keep it tight and let the rest do the business," Hogg said.

On Thursday Australia will announce their squad for the Brisbane Test that begins the following Thursday. MacGill was thought to be Shane Warne's natural replacement but his flat performance in a Pura Cup match at the SCG -- he had match figures of 4 for 280 from 55 overs -- and Hogg's success has created renewed interest in the slow-bowling position.

## Bangladesh win opener

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh kabaddi team got off to a bright start in the Asian Indoor Games beating Japan 39-28 with two losses in their first match in Macau yesterday.

The winners led the first half 18-15.

## 5-star Mashrafe

FROM PAGE 17

Stylish batsman Alok Kapali scored 42 as the Sylhetis faltered their way through to 195 runs in 49.5 overs. Kapali got some support from captain Rajin Saleh, Ejaz Ahmed and Saif Mahmud. But Dhaka's spin was too much for them. Man-of-the-match Mosharraf Hossain took three wickets while captain Mohammad Ashraful picked two. Mahmudul Riyad and Mehrab Hossain took one each while pacemen Mabubul Alam and Naz Morshed took a wicket each too.

In reply, Dhaka got off to a flying start with openers Javed Omar and Al Shahri sharing a 48-run opening stand. Pinch-hitter Mosharraf missed his 50 by a run as he rounded off his bowling effort with a 68-ball innings that featured three fours and a six.

## BRIEF SCORES

**KHULNA:** 196 all out in 46 overs (Imrul 21, Nahidul 8, Bashar 27, Shakib 5, Tushar 44, Jamal 28, Mashrafe 5, Salim 3, Ziaur 30, Rasel 3, Murad 1 not out; Sabbir 4-32, Kamru 2-40, Ehsanul 1-21, Afzal 1-39, Rubel 1-43).

**CHITTAGONG:** 187 all out in 46.4 overs (Mabubul 14, Nafis 4, Afzal 7, Nazimuddin 5, Elias 18, Ehsanul 41, Faisal 19, Dhiman 38, Sabir 9, Rubel 9, Kamru 8 not out; Mashrafe 5-31, Ziaur 2-10, Rasel 2-43, Shakib 1-38). Result: Khulna won by 9 runs.

**Man-of-the-match:** Mashrafe Bin Mortaza (Khulna).

**RAJSHAHI:** 295-8 in 50 overs (Jahurul 55, Zunaed 120, Naeem 17, Mashud 5, Moshifur 20, Forhad 24, Suhrawardi 24, Shahzada 3, Mahibub 9 not out, Delwar 7 not out; Tariqul 4-57, Ariful 2-74, Sajidul 1-54, Arafat 1-63).

**BARISAL:** 179 all out in 48 overs (Shahriar 9, Hannan 9, Imran 24, Ariful 39, Rafigul 15, Raisul 2, Arifat 6, Bashar 4, Sajid 40, Tariqul 1, Shahena 30 not out; Farhad 3-28; Sohravardi 2-16, Shahzada 2-30, Naeem 1-29, Delwar 1-41). Result: Rajshahi won by 116 runs.

**Man-of-the-match:** Zunaed Siddiqui (Rajshahi).

**SYLHET:** 195 all out in 49.5 overs (Mabubul 24, Imtiaz 1, Rajin 35, Saif 28, Kapali 42, Sharif 1, Ejaz 27, Nazmul 28 not out, Tapash 0, Enamul 6, Nabil 0; Mabubul 1-36, Niaz 1-22, Mosharraf 3-32, Ashraful 2-23, Mehrab 1-25, Riyad 1-27).

**DHAKA:** 196-3 in 41.2 overs (Javed 48, Al Shahri 34, Mehrab 9, Mosharraf 9 not out; Nabil 2-26, Allok 1-27). Result: Dhaka won by 7 wickets.

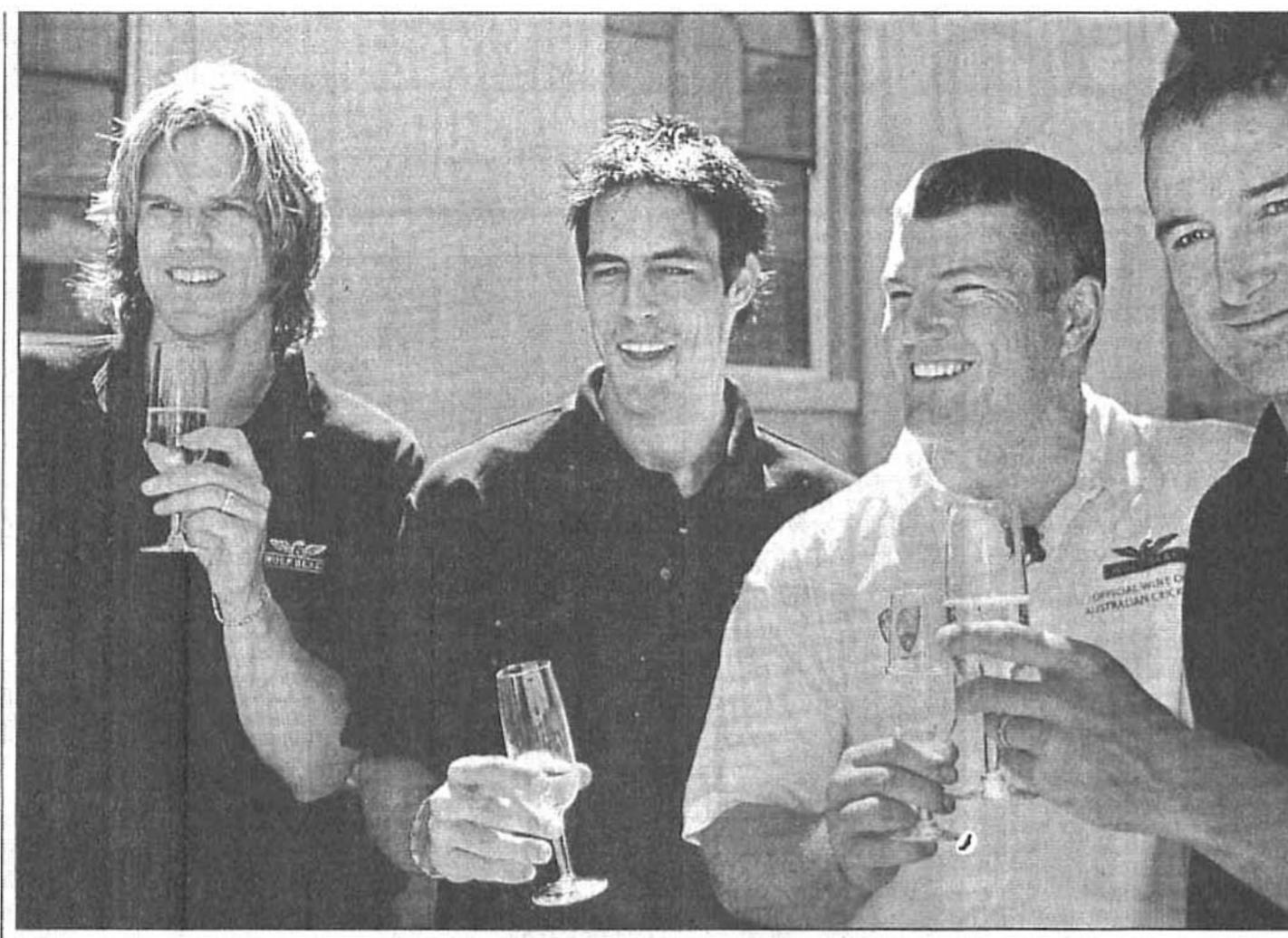
**Man-of-the-match:** Mosharraf Hossain (Dhaka).

## Lebanon last

FROM PAGE 20

on November 25, 2007.

**FIRST ROUND WINNERS** Iraq, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Yemen, Oman, Hong Kong, Syria, Thailand, Turkmenistan, UAE, Qatar, Jordan, Bahrain, Singapore, DPR Korea, Lebanon, Indonesia and Kuwait.



(L-R) Australian players Nathan Bracken, Mitchell Johnson, Stuart MacGill and Phil Jacques toast as they entertain guests during a winery promotion in Sydney on Tuesday.

## Now or never for MacGill

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Stuart MacGill admits his 40-Test career will be over if he is left out of the first cricket Test against Sri Lanka in Brisbane next week.

"If they're not going to pick me at the Gabba, then they're not going to pick me," MacGill said here Tuesday.

MacGill, who hopes to take over from the retired Shane Warne when the Australian team is announced on Thursday, said the Brisbane pitch traditionally favoured a wrist-spin bowler, and was the logical place for him to play.

"The Gabba is very good to bowl spin on. It bounces, it turns, it's fast... you get results there," MacGill said.

"I know that I'm improving. I'm simplifying as a bowler and that's what comes with age."

MacGill's strike rate in Brisbane is slightly below his career average.

In three Tests at the ground against England, West Indies and India, the 36-year-old leg-spinner has taken 11 wickets at 26, compared with his career average of five wickets per Test at an average of 27.

Warne took 68 wickets in 11 Tests at the Gabba, at an average of just over 20.

MacGill has not played for Australia since taking 16 wickets in a two-Test series in Bangladesh in April 2006.

MacGill, who has 198 Test wickets, has no doubts he is good enough to take plenty more.

"I know for a fact that when I'm bowling well I'm good enough to play for anyone," he said.

"I know that I'm improving. I'm simplifying as a bowler and that's what comes with age."

"That's why spin bowlers get better with age, because they realise that most of what people say to them doesn't matter."

Batsmen have to rely on their eye. I have to rely on my brain, and fortunately that's not degenerating very quickly at the moment."

MacGill is resigned that his elite playing career will be over should he not get chosen later this week.

"I'll be disappointed because it'll probably be a good indicator that I'm not going to play again," he said.

"But I'm very, very comfortable with everything that I've achieved to this point, so I think it would be a bit wrong for me to be too upset about missing out."

"I've got a lot of things that I want to achieve for New South Wales and that's keeping me in the game at the moment," he said.

## Symonds signs for IPL

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Australia's Andrew Symonds has shrugged off racist taunting in India to sign up for its official Twenty20 league along with captain Ricky Ponting and 11 other team-mates, officials said Tuesday.

Vice captain Adam Gilchrist and opener Matthew Hayden have also joined the big Australian contingent for the new Indian Premier League (IPL), they said.

The other players are Michael Clarke, Mike Hussey, Brett Lee, Nathan Bracken, Brad Haddin, Mitchell Johnson, Simon Katich, Jason Gillespie and Cameron White.

The latest signings come 10 days after Australia completed an ill-tempered one-day tour of India in which the visitors accused Indian crowds of bombing Symonds with monkey chants and gestures.

"I am sure the cricket-loving

public of India would cherish the opportunity to see the world champions turn out for local teams," said Indian cricket board vice-president Lalit Modi, who heads the IPL.

The induction of the prodigious Aussie talent will add a whole new dimension to the cricket that is played in the Indian Premier League."

Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi was also taken on board, taking to 44 the number of international players who have signed up with the IPL.

The IPL, a brainchild of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is backed by the International Cricket Council and supported by cricket boards around the world.

The rebel league, to be played in April-May next year offers three million dollars in prize money and will have eight teams to be bought by franchises.

The top two sides will qualify for an international Champions

Twenty20 League to be held at an undecided venue in October 2008.

Among other international stars with the IPL are Test captains Graeme Smith of South Africa, Shoaib Malik of Pakistan and Daniel Vettori of New Zealand.

Retired Australian greats Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath, Sri Lankan Mahela Jayawardene and Sanath Jayasuriya and Pakistani fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar will also feature.

The BCCI is also expected to field the entire Indian team in the inaugural league.

The BCCI set up the IPL in an apparent bid to crush the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) which is bankrolled by India's largest media company, Zee Telefilms.

The rebel league, to be played in Chandigarh next month, features mainly retired international stars, headed by West Indian great Brian Lara and Pakistan's Inzamam-ul-Haq, along with a slew of domestic has-beens.

The rebel league, to be played in a tough tour and he will get hardly two weeks to prepare the boys. We have to show patience," he added.

Lipu also cautioned that Shaun Williams will work with Siddons for the next few months as assistant coach.

"He is also not interested to run training camps in traditional manner like working with the whole squad. He rather wants to work with a group of players," he said.

"I am sure the cricket-loving

## Kewell to make return

FROM PAGE 20

being forced to do without winger Jermaine Pennant, who is out until next year with a stress fracture of the shin, and first-choice centre-back Daniel Agger, who is still recovering from his own broken metatarsal.

The loss of Torres is probably the biggest blow to Benitez. The Spaniard had to be withdrawn at half-time on Sunday and Liverpool's cutting edge was significantly reduced as a result.

Peter Crouch is expected to make only his sixth start of the season on Wednesday and the England striker admits he is desperate to make an impact.

"I was pleased to get on against Arsenal, even though it wasn't in

the circumstances I would have liked with Fernando getting injured," he said. "You always want your best players on the pitch and hopefully he won't be out for too long."

"From my point of view I have not had too many chances this season and so I have to take them when they come along. It's going to be a long season, we have a big squad and everybody wins games at some point. I just know that whenever I play I have to perform."

"Players are greedy and they want to play every week but it's not possible. We know there could be anything up to 70 matches this season and we understand what the manager is trying to do."

the circumstances I would have liked with Fernando getting injured," he said. "You always want your best players on the pitch and hopefully he won't be out for too long."

"From my point of view I have not had too many chances this season and so I have to take them when they come along. It's going to be a long season, we have a big squad and everybody wins games at some point. I just know that whenever I play I have to perform."

"Players are greedy and they want to play every week but it's not possible. We know there could be anything up to 70 matches this season and we understand what the manager is trying to do."

## Spotlight on Wenger's kids

FROM PAGE 20

get a rhythm when you are out of the team.

"I always want to be part of things but when you are young, you have to wait for your chances."

"I have done well when I have come off the bench, but because we have won so many games, the team has not changed very much."

Robson said: "I know my players a lot better now - what they are capable of and what they are not capable of - and I think they are getting to know what I want as well."

"I admit it has taken longer than I would have liked, but there is much more of an understanding now, and you can see that out on the pitch."

Jon Stead is likely to keep his place in attack after scoring in his team's 1-1 draw at Hull at the weekend.

"I always want to be part of things but when you are young, you have to wait for your chances."

"I have done well when I have come off the bench, but because we have won so many games, the team has not changed very much."

Robson said: "I know my players a lot better now - what they are capable of and what they are not capable of - and I think they are getting to know what I want as well."

"I admit it has taken longer than I would have liked, but there is much more of an understanding now, and you can see that out on the pitch."

Scholes will miss at least 13 league matches, starting with the champions' crunch clash at Arsenal on Saturday.

Jon Stead is likely to keep his

"I always want to be part of things but when you are young, you have to wait for your chances."

"I have done well when I have come off the bench, but because we have won so many games, the team has not changed very much."

Robson said: "I know my players a lot better now - what they are capable of and what they are not capable of - and I think they are getting to know what I want as well."

"I admit it has taken longer than I would have liked, but there is much more of an understanding now, and you can see that out on the pitch."

Scholes will miss at least 13 league matches, starting with the champions' crunch clash at Arsenal on Saturday.

Jon Stead is likely to keep his

"I always want to be part of things but when you are young, you have to wait for your chances."

"I have done well when I have come off the bench, but because we have won so many games, the team has not changed very much."

Robson said: "I know my players a lot better now - what they are capable of and what they are not capable of - and I think they are getting to know what I want as well."

"I admit it has taken longer than I would have liked, but there is much more of an understanding now, and you can see that out on the pitch."

Scholes will