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D/N Tests draw flak

CRICINFO, undated

Ricky Ponting has warned administrators to remember the failed experiment of day-night first-class matches before trying the same thing in Tests. Cricket Australia is looking at the idea and wants to trial it within the next decade, but Ponting and Daniel Vettori hope the traditional format remains.

Night matches were played in the Sheffield Shield from 1994-95 to 1998-99 and the struggle for runs under lights concerned Ponting.

"It sounded great at the time, but everyone I've spoken to who played in those games found that they were pretty hard work, especially the batsmen," Ponting said. "There's colour of balls and all that sort of stuff that they have to get on top before they start entertaining the idea of day-night Test matches. The ball one would be one of the biggest issues I imagine."

James Sutherland, the Cricket Australia chief executive, is investigating the change in an effort to get a bigger television audience. Matches could be played from 3pm-10pm instead of the current schedule of 11am-6pm.

Ponting said world captains have all been concerned about playing Tests under lights when the natural light starts to fade. "If they come up with appropriate measures to cope with a lot of things," he said, "we will start entertaining the idea a bit more."

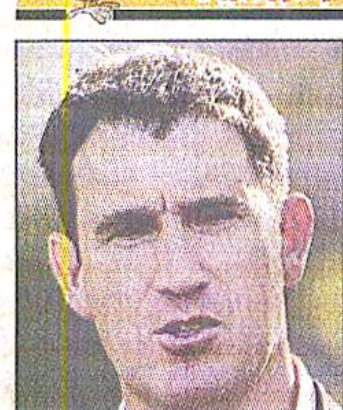
Vettori said he had trouble picking up the red ball at times during last month's series in South Africa.

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Did U Know?

The first Wimbledon final winner was Spencer Gore. He achieved this feat in 1877 - from a field of 22 players - at the age of 27 and in front of an audience of just 200. He defeated William Marshall in straight sets in 48 minutes.



James Sutherland
(Cricket Australia's chief executive)

"I've always subscribed to the theory that you shouldn't make a fast bowler angry than he already is." When asked for his thoughts about Shaun Tait after New Zealand raised questions about his action.



ESPN
Australia v New Zealand
First One-Day International
Live at 9:13am
Sportscenter India
Sport News
Live at 8:30pm

What to WATCH
National Cricket League
(Round Eight, Day One)
Barisal v Dhaka
Venue: Fatullah Cricket Stadium
Rajshahi v Chittagong
Venue: Rajshahi Divisional Stadium
Khulna v Sylhet
Venue: Khulna Divisional Stadium



AN EARLY ENCOUNTER: Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraf (L) taking questions from the local media that included former New Zealand opener Mark Richardson (R) on arrival at the Auckland International Airport yesterday.

Tigers arrive in NZ

Cricket

TIGERCRICKET.COM, Hamilton

For the Bangladesh team the first impression of New Zealand has been one of pleasant surprise. Arriving in December with the mind playing all over the prospects of one chilly Kiwi tour it doesn't hurt when you see glorious sunshine and temperature hovering around the 20-degree mark.

The Tigers touched down at the Auckland International Airport around 1pm local time (6am Bangladesh Standard Time) following a 12-hour flight from Bangkok and add to that the four and a half hours journeying to and transiting in the Thai capital and you get a marathon travel which only ended after another two hours spent on the bus to Hamilton.

Even during the best of times you cannot expect subcontinent-like cricket frenzy in New Zealand. In fact on landing it is hard to miss the 'Go All Blacks' graffiti on a hanger and instantly you get the message that you are in rugby territory.

But the team was warmly received by New Zealand Cricket officials at the airport and after the immigration and customs formalities had been cleared the Tigers found 20-odd expatriate Bangladeshis and an equal number of local print and electronic media representatives eagerly waiting for them outside the arrival gate.

"This is a team with potential. It is still early days for me but this side has made it to the super eights in two World Cups in 2007 so definitely we can expect ourselves to push New Zealand in the one-day series and we'll try to play as well as we can in the Test series," said coach Jamie Siddons when asked what he expected out of this tour.

"We have to get used to the conditions here quickly because otherwise we will struggle. I know New Zealand are not in great form at the moment but still they are a tough team at home and we need to be at hundred percent by the time the series starts. We will get three practice matches and plenty of opportunity to train so I think we will be well prepared."

"Our bowling attack is good and

I believe if we can post a total in the range of 230-240 then we have a genuine chance of defending that score," said captain Mohammad Ashraf who is one of the four survivors, the others being his deputy Mashrafe Mortaza, Javed Omar Belim and Tushar Imran, from the last tour here in 2001-02.

Mortaza said that a lot has changed since. "In 2001 we were not experienced but this is a much better equipped side. We have youngsters who have tasted success and more young players are coming in with the determination of proving themselves. We all are fresh from playing domestic first class matches and everyone is raring to go. Bangladesh cricket have come a long way since our last visit and hopefully we can show that on this tour."

"Our goal is to try and perform to our potential in the ODI series because that is where we have had most success and to take the Test matches to five days and be competitive over those five days."

The team bus took the Tigers to Hamilton to their Novotel Taiui

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Honoured for courage

SPORTS REPORTER

More than any of their achievements, Wednesday night's reception accorded to the athletes of Bangladesh Special Olympics team and their parents was recognition of their courage and sports spirit.

Forty-seven special and exceptional athletes, representing more than 10 million mentally disabled men and women in Bangladesh, stood out among the 500 or so guests with their individual plaques and a smile on their face that lit up the ball-room.

Mobile phone operator Grameenphone, sponsors of the team during their successful participation at this year's World Games held in Shanghai, hosted

the function at a local hotel.

The athletes returned home last month with 32 gold, 15 silver and 24 bronze medals and a reputation that they were worthy participants.

Apart from their parents and teachers, leading lights in sports and culture were present during the occasion.

Former cricket captains Roquibul Hassan, Gazi Ashraf Hossain Lipu and Habibul Bashar and former footballer Kaiser Hamid sat with the athletes, in a unique piece of organisation by the hosts. The athletes and their families took pictures and shared stories of their wonderful time in Shanghai with the country's legendary figures.

Grameenphone CEO Anders

Jensen, in his welcome address, congratulated the Special Olympics team and expressed pride at their association with the athletes.

"These courageous athletes set an example for each one of us. They show us how to defy hurdles and how to make impossible an obsolete word," said Jensen.

"Their determination and resilience would serve as an inspiration for Bangladesh in years to come," said the Swedish CEO of the country's largest mobile phone operator.

Professor Kabir Chowdhury, who also presented awards, said that these children were not only special, but also exceptional.

He concluded his short speech saying, "They have lit the fire."



Former national footballer Khurshid Babul enjoys an inter-district women's soccer championship match with his family members at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex yesterday.

NCL resumes today

SPORTS REPORTER

The eighth round of the 9th National Cricket League will resume in three venues across the country today.

League leaders Rajshahi take on the improving Chittagong at home while Dhaka face Barisal at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium.

Khulna, hit hard by the departure of star power due to Bangladesh's tour of New Zealand, have some respite as they face Sylhet in the Shaheed Bishreshtha Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman Stadium.

Rajshahi and Khulna are level on 80 points but the former are ahead on their higher number of wins (4). Chittagong, who had a good outing in Khulna in their last round match, are in third position with 65 points.

Dhaka, three points behind their port city rivals, have a stiff job in hand against Barisal as they look to salvage pride.

Without a drastic improvement in Dhaka's form coupled with Rajshahi and Khulna's failure, it looks unlikely that Dhaka will regain their four-day title.

It is quite hard to comprehend as Rajshahi regained their lead with a six-wicket win over Barisal in the last round but Dhaka should take this chance to climb up the ladder ahead of Khulna.

Dhaka clash Rangamati in final

SPORTS REPORTER

Dhaka and Rangamati will play the final of the inter-district women's football competition tomorrow after elbowing out their semifinal opponents by identical margins yesterday.

Mainu Pru and Nubai scored in Rangamati's 2-0 win over neighbours Khagrachhari in the first semifinal at the Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex while Dalia Akhter struck both the goals for Dhaka who blanked Narayanganj also 2-0.

The final will kick off at 3pm.

Jewel-Mushtaque match on Dec 16

SPORTS REPORTER

The traditional Shaheed Jewel and Shaheed Mushtaque cricket match will be held at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium on Victory Day.

Last year's winner Shaheed Mushtaque Eleven, who won by three wickets, will be led by burly opener Rashedul Haq while Shakil Haider, who recently played for Team North in the Challenging Cup, will captain Shaheed Jewel Eleven in the friendly match.

TEAMS
Shaheed Mushtaque Eleven: Shakil Haider (c), Shaikat Ali, Amit Mazumder, Nizamuddin Ripon, Ifekhar Nayeem, Mominal Haque, Ashikul Islam, Ariful Haque, Taposh Ghosh, Saiful Islam, Mukhter Ali, Shohag Gazi, Humayun Kabir, Rumman Islam.
Shaheed Jewel Eleven: Rashedul Haque, Sanjay Chakrobarty, Sumon Saha, Salahuddin Ujjal, Maruf Sunny, Arman Hossain, Rubaiyat Haque, Rashedul Islam, Raihanuddin Arafat, Mohammad Shoaib, Shikder Kankan, Rezaul Islam, Hasibul Hossain.

Sultan slams media too

Football

STAR SPORT DESK

Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president SA Sultan dragged the media in his on-going war against Sports Adviser Tapan Chowdhury when he lodged an official complaint to the chairman of National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday.

In a letter to the NSC chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed, Sultan claimed that the sports adviser had made some unnecessary and uncalled for remarks on his 'family' television channel ETV and to reporters against the BFF beyond his jurisdiction on December 6.

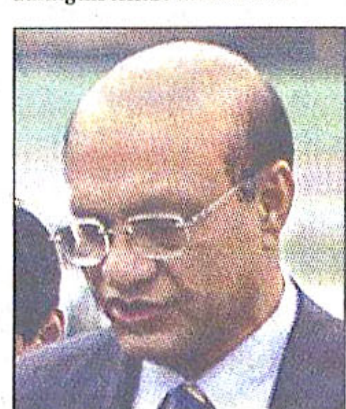
"He (Tapan) had made similar remarks in the past to tarnish the image of the federation but we did not complain to show respect for him. Damaging the BFF's image is not respectable for his ministry either," stated the letter signed by Sultan.

Sultan also seemed to have got tired of the media and blasted it by saying: "The media cannot be controlled without 'exchange' and we haven't indulged in this."

The BFF boss however was not available to clarify what he meant by the word 'exchange'. Also, it could not be known why he needed to control the media, especially

after claiming huge success -- including the 2003 SAFF Championship triumph at home and the launching of the Professional Football League -- as the federation chief for the last five years.

Sultan, a former BNP MP, declared that there had been no anomalies, failure or nepotism during his tenure whatsoever.



SA SULTAN

"However, the politically motivated media and a certain government official have launched a propaganda blitz against us," he commented in the written statement.

Sultan urged the NSC chairman to ignore 'politically motivated' media reports and the remarks of

the sports adviser to give the BFF an opportunity to hold a fair election for the greater national interest.

"We believe that your (Moeen U Ahmed) direction and decisions will help us hold an election that will give the BFF the right leadership. We need your help and involvement in doing this. Otherwise, there will be no alternative than to resign," the statement added.

The BFF boss also defended his federation by saying that it ran the game according to its calendar and only failed to stage the Dhaka Premier and First Division Leagues in 2006 due to unavoidable reasons.

"Although there has been a drop in crowd turn-ups, football is still popular and an Abahani-Mohammedan match attracts about 20,000 fans," the statement added.

However, the facts say different things. It is still believed that the success in the SAFF Championship in 2003 was result of the past committee which roped in Austrian coach George Kottan. But Sultan threw the mentor out when he should have kept the successful coach for a better future.

The Sultan-led BFF -- always cash-starved -- failed to provide a coach to the national team for over

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England salvage draw

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

England's batsmen shone under pressure to draw the second cricket Test against Sri Lanka here on Thursday and keep their hopes alive in the three-match series.

The tourists, needing to bat out the fifth day after trailing by 197 runs on the first innings, played solidly to move to 250-3 in their second knock by tea before rain washed out the final session.

England now head for the final Test in Galle from next Tuesday seeking a series-leveling win after losing the first Test in Kandy by 88 runs last week.

Alastair Cook, captain Michael Vaughan and Ian Bell hit half-centuries to keep the Sri Lankans at bay on a dead pitch where just 22 wickets fell over the five days.

Sri Lankan captain Mahela Jayawardene, who was later named

man of the match for his 195 in the team's first innings total of 548-9, defended his decision to delay the declaration until after tea on the fourth day.

"I don't think even two days would have been enough to bowl out England in the second innings because the wicket was so flat and slow," he said.

Jayawardene, who surpassed Sanath Jayasuriya as Sri Lanka's highest Test run-getter in this match, said he missed the veteran's slow left-arm spin.

"We really missed his bowling," the captain said of Jayasuriya, who retired from Test cricket after the Kandy match. "But forcing a result was never going to be easy in these conditions."

Vaughan said he was delighted at his team's ability to draw the game.

"It's one of the most comfortable draws I have been involved in," the England captain said.

"Normally we panic somewhere,

but not today (Thursday). We got through with some good batting and it has turned into a comfortable draw. The bowlers did well to keep running in on that pitch."

"We are still 1-0 down but have got a lot to fight for to go home with a draw. I hope the Galle wicket is a bit more balanced."

Cook (62) shared an opening stand of 107 with Vaughan (61), their second successive century partnership in the match after putting on 133 in the first innings.

Vaughan was the lone batsman to be dismissed before lunch when he offered an easy return catch to fast bowler Dilhara Fernando.

Cook fell off the first ball after resumption, edging part-timer Chamara Silva to Mahela Jayawardene at first slip.

Bell (54) put on 52 for the third wicket with Kevin Pietersen when he holed out against Muttiah Muralidaran, reducing the tourists to 204-3 midway through the after

SEE PAGE 22 COL 2



Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene (L) takes a sharp catch at slip to remove England opener Alastair Cook (C) on the fifth and final day of the drawn second Test at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground in Colombo yesterday.

Ricky's score to settle Chappell-Hadlee Trophy starts today

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

If you think the Chappell-Hadlee Series has lost its lustre, think again. Ricky Ponting has "a score to settle" after Australia were defeated 3-0 last time and wants his best outfit firing for the three-match competition which starts in Adelaide on Friday.

Ponting, who says the series is "pretty big for us", is desperate to get his hands back on the trophy. "New Zealand completely outplayed us last time and thoroughly deserved the result," Ponting, who missed the contests to prepare for the World Cup, said. "We have got a bit of a score to settle, there's no

doubt about it.

"We want to make sure we've got the trophies we play for back in the cabinet in Melbourne. This is one we haven't got."

Australia have delayed naming their team until Friday morning after question marks over Brett Lee, who missed practice with a virus, and Andrew Symonds' ankle, although both should be ready. Ponting "decided to play the cautious card" with Lee, who did not train, while he rated Symonds' chances of playing "at 95%" after he completed a practice session.

Both are key men, and Australia will be particularly keen for Lee to join Shaun Tait after they were too quick for New Zealand in the Twenty20 on Tuesday. Ponting, who put his foot up for that game,

liked what he saw.

"I was really impressed with how they hustled and had a lot of energy and intent in the field," he said. "That's something we pride ourselves on, the Australian team, making sure we're like that and up for every contest that's on."

Ponting said it was likely they would bring in a spinner, in which case Brad Hogg will get the nod. "There will be a tough decision to be made if Brett's fit," he said, "probably on which of the fast bowlers we do leave out." The allrounder James Hopes impressed Ponting with his flexibility in the India series and is tipped to play.

While Australia's fast men are going great guns, New Zealand may choose two spinners again, like

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