

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 1am-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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AN EARLY ENCOUNTER: Bangladesh captain Mohammad Ashraful (L) taking questions from the local media that included former New Zealand opener Mark Richardson (R) on arrival at the Auckland International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: TIGERCRICKET.COM

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 sub-continent-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."

The team will take the Tigers to Hamilton to their Novotel Tainui on Friday. Our bowling attack is good and

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 Shahid Birshreshtha 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 and Rangamati will play the final of the Inter-district women's football competition tomorrow after elbowing our 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 Akther struck both the goals for Dhaka who blanked Narayanganj also 2-0.

The final will kick off at 3pm.

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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

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.

"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 a year.

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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 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.

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

"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 runs last week."

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,



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 feet up for that game,

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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 sporting 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 Lipsi 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.

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

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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.

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CRICKET

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

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