

'Indians won't enjoy Tait'

PTI, Melbourne

Considering that the Indian batsmen don't really relish fast bowling, Australia should pick Shaun Tait ahead of Brad Hogg and unleash a four-pronged pace attack to knock down the visitors, advocates Michael Kasprowicz.

"I'd go with four quicks. When you are looking for the bowlers who are going to get you 20 wickets ... On a drop-in wicket it doesn't really offer a lot of turn," he said.

"Nothing against Brad Hogg or anything, he's a fantastic bowler. I just think the Indian batsmen are seasoned campaigners against spin bowling and what they don't particularly like is fast bowling," Kasprowicz was quoted as saying by the Australian Associated Press (AAP), a news agency.

"Shaun Tait bowling yorkers at 160kmph, if you ask most batsmen around, they don't particularly enjoy it."

"Certainly if it's swinging in at your toes, it's not all that comfortable to play," he reasoned.

Hogg, however, enjoys the backing of skipper Ricky Ponting and vice captain Adam Gilchrist, both of whom believe having a spinner would add variety to the attack.

But Kasprowicz believes part-time spinners like Michael Clarke would be more than enough.

"The mix of Brett Lee and Stuart Clark with left-arm Mitchel Johnson's variation and Shaun Tait as well, you have an arsenal there to go hard at them," he said.

"You've always got (part-time spinners) Andrew Symonds and Michael Clarke if you did want to change things around." And having four pacers would not make the attack one-dimensional, he asserted.

"Each of those quick bowlers are different in their own way and I think there is enough variation there."

PCB bans Inzy and ICL stars

BBC ONLINE, undated

Pakistan have banned six players from domestic cricket, including former captain Inzamamul Haq, for playing in an unauthorised Twenty20 tournament.

The six were all involved in the Indian Cricket League, which took place earlier this month.

And they could now take legal action to try and force the Pakistan Cricket Board to reverse its decision.

"Cricket is our bread and butter. This is a violation of our fundamental rights," said batsman Imran Farhat.

Abdul Razzaq, Shabbir Ahmed, Taufiq Umar and Azhar Mahmood were the other Pakistan players involved in the ICL, which featured six teams and was bankrolled by broadcaster Zee Telefilms.

But the league was not recognised by the International Cricket Council or the boards of its full member countries, including Pakistan.

"It is a policy decision that players who play in unauthorised leagues cannot be allowed to play in any domestic competition organised by the PCB."

"We cannot allow violation of our rules and regulations by anyone. We don't think it is a harsh decision," said PCB domestic general manager Shafiq Ahmed.

Osim goes

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university hospital near his home before moving to a rehabilitation centre on Monday, Tajima said.

Tajima informed Osim for the first time that he had been replaced as national coach by homegrown tactician Takeshi Okada, who led Japan to their World Cup finals debut in 1998.

Osim, who led the former Yugoslavia to the 1990 World Cup quarter-finals, collapsed at home in the early morning on November 16 after watching an English Premiership match, according to the association.

About Osim's future, Tajima said his association might offer him a post when he fully recovers.

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100 Tests

FROM PAGE 17
100th Test, be sure there won't be a single Indian not wishing him well. At the twilight of an eventful career he finally seems to have won over even those who harboured a strong dislike for him.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Fazlur Rahman Babul (C), football organiser and coordinator of the youth football development programme under the assistance of Canary Wharf, welcomes British Aviation Minister Jim Fitzpatrick (3rd from right) at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

'It depends on the pitch'

Cricket

APP, Melbourne

India are considering playing two spinners to capitalise on their batting depth to pressure Australia in Wednesday's opening match of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, skipper Anil Kumble said Tuesday.

Kumble, fresh from leading India to a home series triumph over Pakistan, said the team would be playing to their strengths and are contemplating using both spinners, himself and Harbhajan Singh, to go after the 20 Australian wickets and victory.

"Yes, there is a case for playing two spinners, but it all depends on how the pitch looks the morning of the match ... we will take a final call Wednesday morning," Kumble told his match-eve press conference here Tuesday.

The Indians have been talking up their chances of inflicting their first series win in Australia and Australia's first home series defeat in 14 years.

To do that, Kumble said India would focus on their own strengths to bring off their pinnacle achievement against the world Test champions in the four-Test series.

"I think the key to winning any Test match is to score runs and, if you have runs on the board, then any team can get under pressure," he said. "That will be the thing, try and get runs on the board so you can put pressure on the opposition and get 20 wickets."

"If we play to our strength, our batting is definitely our strength, (and) I know our batters can fire," he added. "We have the potential to do that (and) it's important for us to stick with our strengths and do the job."

The Melbourne Cricket Ground wicket is expected to favour the fast bowlers early, before it starts taking later in the Boxing Day Test match.

"It is important to get the momentum early on," Kumble said. "But, having said that, in Test cricket you still have time to catch up."

Kumble, the third all-time leading wicket-taker in Tests with 584 wickets, said he was looking forward to the challenge of humbling Australia on their home pitches.

"It's a very important tour for all of us," Kumble said. "Personally, at least for me, this definitely will be my last tour of Australia with the Indian team so it will be very special to go back with a victory."

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Crowe also targeted coach John Bracewell, though he suggested that criticism needs to focus on the players. Bracewell, with renewed backing from the New Zealand board, is not going anywhere.

Crowe had called for Bracewell to step down right after the World Cup in April, following New Zealand's exit at the semi-final stage. He now says that he is tired of Bracewell's astounding interviews and selections during the short tour to Australia. "Braces this, braces that - I'm sick of the talk and the headlines about the coach which have dominated for weeks and weeks," he said. "When I was asked what I thought after we lost the World Cup semi, I said 'it's time for a change to keep evolving' but now we need to forget it."

"(NZ Cricket CEO) Justin Vaughan has made his call - his first big one. So have the players. Braces is under pressure. They have what they wanted so now it's all their heads on the line, series in-series out. Braces isn't going anywhere I promise you."

Bracewell was handed a two-year extension in July this year, and has been in charge of the side since 2003. And despite the recent losses against South Africa and Australia, Vaughan believes the right man is in charge.

"He's under no more pressure than when he started [four years ago]," Vaughan told the Dominion Post. "But we've just played two difficult sides. The results were disappointing but we expect that to improve now. He's got two home series against Bangladesh and England now, which we should win."

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Vettori must prove: Crowe

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Martin Crowe, the former New Zealand captain, has launched a stinging attack on the current leadership of New Zealand cricket. Unimpressed by Daniel Vettori's captaincy, Crowe, arguably his country's greatest batsman ever, says it's high time the left-arm spinner showed why he was selected to lead in place of Stephen Fleming.

"Daniel Vettori, Jacob Oram, Brendon McCullum and Scott Styris have all got to put their big money where their busy mouths are - Vettori in particular," Crowe told stuff.co.nz. "He [Vettori] has to get up to speed ASAP and remind us every day why the selectors felt he's better option than Fleming."

After inspiring New Zealand to the semi-finals of the ICC World Twenty20, Vettori has had a torrid time at the helm, his side losing

both the Test and ODI series away in South Africa, and relinquishing the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy after a 2-0 loss to Australia.

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Anderson chasing MU dream

Football

AFP, London

Brazilian midfielder Anderson says he is happy to spend the chilly festive period playing football - and not relaxing on Copacabana beach - as he pursues his dream of making history with Manchester United.

Anderson, who led the former Yugoslavia to the 1990 World Cup quarter-finals, collapsed at home in the early morning on November 16 after watching an English Premiership match, according to the association.

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