

Sunny knows Dravid's pain

BBC ONLINE, undated

India batting legend Sunil Gavaskar says Rahul Dravid is opening the batting reluctantly against Australia.

Dravid faced 66 balls but scored just five runs and had two slices of luck as India struggled on day two at the MCG.

And Gavaskar said: "I think it was something that he wouldn't have been too happy about. It's something he would have taken on reluctantly."

"Opening in India is one thing, opening in Australia against Brett Lee and Stuart Clark is a difficult thing."

Lee and Clark each took four wickets as India, replyng to Australia's 343, were shot out for 196.

Dravid, 34, is playing his 116th Test and is opening for the ninth time.

Although he has had two centuries opening in Pakistan, his next best score is 31 and his average as an opener, at 33.54, is far below his career average of nearly 60.

Since relinquishing the captaincy in September, however, Dravid no longer has such a major say in team strategy.

New skipper Anil Kumble was keen to find a place for Yuvraj Singh in the middle order, and it was felt the best way to accommodate Yuvraj was to promote Dravid.

But Gavaskar said despite his reluctance, Dravid was happy to help out his team if necessary.

"He's a team man, and he and Kumble are best mates and would have discussed this at length," he said, predicting that Dravid could remain as an opener for the whole series.

Brett reaches

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sidelined from Test cricket for 18 months because of an ankle injury through 2004-05, and missed this year's World Cup win with another ankle problem.

"When the times are going good, you have to look back and think well, okay, I did spend 18 months away from the side, being 12th man," he said.

"I couldn't get a game, so you appreciate the hard times that you've been through and then you appreciate the good times as well."

"I'm happy with the way the ball is coming out currently, I'm being patient, and the body is feeling great."

"Missing the World Cup -- it was pretty painful. Mentally and physically I'm in a great state of mind."

Red is the colour

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Jewell did not come across and tackle me."

Fulham substitute Moritz Volz's dismissal for a second yellow card in his side's 5-1 capitulation at Tottenham made it five red cards in the Premier League.

The previous low for dismissals in a day was 17 on December 21, 2002.

Yesterday, the Coca-Cola Championship and League Two witnessed four sendings-off each but the busiest referees were in League One, with six red cards waved. Three came at Bristol Rovers, where Luton's Steve Robinson, Chris Coyne and Anthony Grant all walked in a 1-1 draw.

Keane stares

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mesmerizing half with a trademark free kick in the 45th minute, after Dwight Yorke fouled Darren Fletcher 22 yards from goal, and poor Keane appeared utterly perplexed.

Unsurprisingly United eased off after the break with Ronaldo making way for the South Korean Park Ji-Sung, who made his first appearance since suffering a serious knee injury in March, and Nemanja Vidic stepping aside for the Spanish under-21 international Gerard Pique.

Rooney spurned a glorious chance to extend the visitors' advantage when he fired Nani's 76th minute cross over the bar.

But there was still time for Saha to score his second goal of the game, the French striker stroking home a penalty four minutes from time after Danny Collins had brought down Nani.

"Ronaldo's free kick was the killer," added Keane.

"We might have felt we had a chance at 2-0 down but you don't come back to beat Man Utd 4-3. The fact is that they clearly have some quality players and there's no other way of dressing that up."

"After watching that display my money is still on Manchester United winning the title. They're a great attacking team and they have two decent centre halves too. That's what you need to win games."

As for Ferguson, he can look forward to a title battle in which he believes the form of Wayne Rooney may be critical.

"I think Wayne is getting back to what we would expect of him," the Scot said. "Forwards tend to go on runs and this might be the start for him."

Shiv ton lifts WI

Cricket

APP, Port Elizabeth

Shivnarine Chanderpaul ground out a century before the West Indies were bowled out for 408 on the second day of the first Test against South Africa at St George's Park Thursday.

Chanderpaul made 104 before he was ninth man out, bowled by Andre Nel after a patient vigil which lasted 398 minutes during which he faced 254 balls and hit 12 fours.

It was Chanderpaul's 17th Test century and his fourth against South Africa.

Four balls later Nel had Fidel Edwards caught at backward point and an early tea was taken, ending a long, frustrating time in the field for South Africa, who sent their opponents in to bat on what proved to be an easy-paced pitch.

Fast bowlers Makaya Ntini and Nel took three wickets each but none of the South African bowlers found any of the help in the pitch that captain Graeme Smith expected when he won the toss Wednesday.

Ntini, armed with the second new ball, made two early strikes for South Africa on the second morning before Chanderpaul and Darren Sammy came together in a seventh wicket stand of 71.

Ntini caught Dwayne Bravo for 12



PHOTO: APP

West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul raises his bat to acknowledge the crowd's applause on reaching his century on the second day of the first Test against South Africa at St George's Park in Port Elizabeth on Thursday.

off his own bowling when the all-rounder tried to work him to leg but the ball went high off a leading edge towards point. Ntini and gully fielder Herschelle Gibbs converged and almost collided before Ntini clutched the ball.

Ntini followed up by having Denesh Ramdin caught behind for one.

Chanderpaul made his seventh consecutive score of 50 or better, equalling a mark set by fellow West Indian Everton Weekes in 1948 and 1949 and repeated by Andy Flower of Zimbabwe in 2000 and 2001.

Chanderpaul's sequence started when he made 69 against Pakistan in Karachi in November 2006 and continued when he had scores of 74, 50, 116 not out, 136 not out and 70 in a series in England earlier this year.

He was finally bowled by an excellent delivery from Nel, bowling around the wicket. The ball angled in to the left-hander and straightened on the pitch.

Two balls later, Edwards was bowled by Nel only for square leg umpire Aleem Dar to call no-ball because three fielders were behind square leg. It was only a brief reprieve for Edwards, however, as he was out two balls later.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the second day of the first Test between South Africa and the West Indies at St George's Park on Thursday:

WEST INDIES: First innings (overnight 281-4)

Gayle c Kallis b Harris	66
Ganga boucher b Nel	33
Morton c Prince b Ntini	33
Samuels c Kallis b Steyn	94
Chanderpaul b Nel	104
Bravo c and b Ntini	12
Ramdin c Boucher b Ntini	1
Sammy run out	38
Taylor b Steyn	9
Powell not out	1
Edwards c Prince b Nel	0
Extras: (h-2, lb-8, nb-4, w-3)	17
Total: (All out in 133.4 overs)	408
Fall of wickets: 1-98, 2-102, 3-116, 4-277, 5-296, 6-304, 7-361, 8-385, 9-407.	
Bowler	O M R W
Steyn	31 4 121 2
Ntini	30 6 100 3
Nel	25.4 7 85 3
Harris	30 9 69 1
Kallis	17 8 23 0

WICKETKEEPER: Ntini

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