

T20 final may go to Lord's

CRICINFO, undated

Lord's and The Oval have been nominated as two of the main venues to host next year's ICC World Twenty20, with the England and Wales Cricket Board also recommending Lord's to host the final.

After being chosen as the hosts of the tournament, England have spent the past few months deciding on the venues to be used. The Oval has been chosen as a "preferred bidder" for the warm-ups, group and Super Eight matches and a semifinal.

"I am delighted that Lord's, a world-class venue with a famous history and tradition, has agreed to be recommended hosts," Steve Elworthy, the tournament director, said on Monday in Auckland. "I was privileged to be director for (the) ICC World Twenty20 2007 and thrilled at the success of the event which generated record crowds and also made broadcasting history in India with 1.4 billion viewers tuning in for the final."

"Now I am looking forward to the challenge of raising the standard of Twenty20 cricket even higher here in England and with Lord's as a nominated venue and The Oval as a preferred bidder -- as well as a third world class ground yet to be chosen -- we have already got off to a great start."

Keith Bradshaw, the MCC secretary and chief executive, added: "The MCC committee is extremely pleased, and I am personally delighted, at the ECB's decision to recommend that the final and other matches in the ICC World Twenty20 in 2009 be staged at Lord's. It is bound to be an exciting and major global event, and MCC looks forward to contributing to its success."

"MCC has supported Twenty20 cricket -- a form of the game which virtually every cricketer has played -- since the county competition started a few years ago. At Lord's, these matches have regularly attracted crowds of over 20,000, and I am looking forward to seeing the home of cricket full for the 2009 matches."

The ECB will recommend Lord's to the ICC at their meeting in Dubai on March 18.

ICL's British recruits out in the cold

CRICINFO, undated

Geoff Miller, England's newly-installed chief selector, has hinted that any England player who signs up for the rebel Indian Cricket League could go the same way as New Zealand's Shane Bond, who last month had his national contract terminated and now faces being cast into the international wilderness.

So far only four England players -- Chris Read, Vikram Solanki, Darren Maddy and Paul Nixon -- have taken the lucrative offer from the ICL and, of those, only Read had realistic prospects of resuming his international career. But Miller, in New Zealand with the one-day squad, suggested that the ECB would be making an example of them to prevent others from following the same path.

Contracts for the ICL are worth between £200,000 and £500,000, but the tournaments are not sanctioned by the ICC -- unlike the forthcoming Indian Premier League, which takes place in April. Miller stopped short of saying that legal issues were behind his comments, but instead questioned the motivation of players who sign for the ICL.

"There are lots of factors to consider but if they have chosen to do that (join the ICL), what is the reason to do that?" he told The Guardian. "What's wrong with the England side? It is something you would need to discuss with the player but I would like to feel the players would not want to make that decision."

"I would like to feel those players would want to be with the England side," said Miller. "If it is detrimental to what happens in the changing-room that is paramount to me. I am big on atmosphere in the changing-room and creating a good spirit."

Drogba's

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"Aside from the vote it was what was said that surprised me," added Drogba.

"We're all working for the African continent, there's a huge media presence in Ghana for a competition that was heavily criticised ten years ago."

"So there comes a time when we all have to pull together. I don't think this type of attitude honours Africa so I've decided to pull out of future elections for the Ballon d'Or."

"In my eyes this award has lost its value. I'm a simple player, the decision that I take doesn't hurt a lot of people."

"If I refused to go to Lome it was first for my teammates as you don't organise such an event just two days before a quarterfinal (Monday's game against Guinea)."

"I didn't go as well because of the son of Ulrich Stilicke (the former Ivory Coast coach) has died."

Drogba's Ivory Coast face Egypt in the Nations Cup semifinals on Thursday.

Midfielder Franck Ribery is out



England batsman Dimitri Mascarenhas whacks one of his four consecutive sixes off New Zealand off-spinner Jeetan Patel during the first Twenty20 match at Eden Park in Auckland yesterday.

Skipper pleased with vital victory

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England skipper Paul Collingwood said his team's 32-run win over New Zealand in the first of two Twenty20 matches had been "massively important".

"We didn't perform too well in the ICC World Twenty20," he said after a result which improved England's record to four wins and eight losses in the format.

"(Patel) bowled a few in the slot and they went out of the park."

"We could have got a few more runs but did a lot of good things and the bowlers were fantastic," he said.

"It's a really good, positive start to the tour but we have to keep that up."

England captain Brendon McCullum, leading New Zealand in the absence of injured skipper Daniel Vettori, said: "It didn't go quite according to plan, but I think there's some positives we can take out of it as well."

"The way the young guys played on their debut was good and I'm sure they'll learn a lot from their outing today (Tuesday)."

Rain spoils

FROM PAGE 17

cricket -- it's just incredible. Only a genius can do these things, and he's a genius."

But on 35 Lasith Malinga got the vital breakthrough when Tendulkar chopped the ball onto his stumps.

Sehwag (33) was out shortly after when he gloved a ball down the leg side to wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara, giving an impressive Ishara Amerasinghe his first wicket in one-day internationals in his second match.

Sangakkara will be rueing a crucial miss when he dropped Gambhir off Amerasinghe when the Indian had scored only 11, spilling a difficult diving chance in front of first slip.

Sri Lanka replaced an out-of-sorts Vaas with celebrated off-spinner Muttiah Muralidaran and enjoyed immediate dividends when he struck twice, dismissing Yuvraj (2) caught at first slip and two balls later Rohit Sharma for a duck caught behind.

Sharma risked attracting the wrath of the referee when he stood his ground, visibly upset with the decision by umpire Rudi Koertzen.

After weathering the storm, Dholi and Gambhir exploded in the last 10 overs and smashed the ball to the four and sixes.

all parts of the large Gabba ground.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of India innings in the second match of the triangular one-day international series against Sri Lanka at the Gabba on Tuesday:

INDIA

Sehwag c Sangakkara b Amerasinghe 33
Tendulkar b Malinga 35
Gambhir not out 102
Yuvraj c Jayawardene b Muralidaran 2
Sharma c Sangakkara b Muralidaran 0
Dhoni not out 28
Extras (lb-3, w-4) 7

Total: (Four wkt in 50 overs) 267

Fall of wickets: 1-68, 2-80, 3-83, 4-83.

Did not bat: Uthappa, Pathan, Harbhajan, Sreesanth, Sharma

Bowler O M R W

Vaas 10 0 72 0

Malinga 10 1 56 1

Amerasinghe 10 2 30 1

Muralidaran 10 0 51 2

Kapudera 6 0 23 0

Dilshan 1 0 8 0

Jayasuriya 3 0 24 0

SRI LANKA: Tharanga, Jayasuriya, Sangakkara, Jayawardene, Silva, Dilshan, Kapudera, Vaas, Malinga, Muralidaran, Amerasinghe.

Result: Match abandoned.

Toss: India

The second Twenty20 game is in

Christchurch on Thursday with the first of five one-dayers in Wellington on Saturday.

New Zealand and England play three Tests next month.

Three-times winners Germany face the Austrians again as well as Poland and Croatia in the finals.

Italy host Portugal, who bring a small squad to take on the world champions though that does include the remarkable Cristiano Ronaldo while European champions Greece, seeking to pull another rabbit out of the hat as they did four years ago, host Finland.

FIXTURES

International friendly fixtures to be played on Wednesday (all times GMT):

Croatia v Holland 18:30, Czech Republic v Poland 18:30, Greece v Finland 18:15, Hungary v Slovakia 17:30, Israel v Romania 17:45, Italy v Portugal 18:45, Rep of Ireland v Bulgaria 18:45, Slovenia v Denmark 18:00, Spain v France 19:00, Turkey v Sweden 17:30, England v Switzerland 19:00, Austria v Germany 18:30

There are so many injuries," lamented Bierhoff.

Among those who have had to cry off are Torsten Frings and Christoph Metzelder although skipper Michael Ballack returns from an ankle injury ten months after his last start.

Nat'l badminton from today

UNB, Dhaka

The Islami Bank 28th National Badminton Championships, organised by Bangladesh Badminton Federation, begins today at the Woodnagar Gymnasium.

Chairmen of Islam Bank Prof Abu Nasser Mohammad Abdus Zaher will inaugurate the meet as chief guest.

A total of 228 male and female shuttlers from 56 teams will take part in the five-day meet.

The competition will be held in five events. The events are men's singles and doubles, women's singles and doubles and mixed doubles.

Sponsor Islami Bank will provide Tk 4.5 lakh out of the Tk 5.6 lakh total budget.

Tournament committee chairman Nurul Islam gave details of the championships at a press conference at the National Sports Council (NSC) yesterday.

Atau Rahman, senior vice president of Islam Bank and joint secretary of federation Mariantare were present.

Bidya Niketan clinch boys h'ball trophy

SPORTS REPORTER

Banani Bidya Niketan lifted the Sunnydale 5th Boys Mini handball tournament beating Scholastica 7-4 in the final at the Handball Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 1-

Earlier, Scholastica beat Bangladeshi International School (BIS) 8-4 in the day's first semifinal while the eventual champions Banani Bidya Niketan crushed Play Pen 18-3.

In the 3rd place decider match, Play Pen beat BIS by 7-6 goals.

Priyanshu Sarkar of BIS was adjudged player of the tournament.

After the final, Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA) president Monjurul Haque distributed prizes among the winners as chief guest while Sunnydale principal Tazin Ahmed was the special guest.

Bangladesh Handball Federation general secretary Asaduzzaman Kohinoor and tournament committee secretary Mizanur Islam were present on the occasion.

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Cruising on a greasy road

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Murali perfectly, and their personal tussle eventually read 32 runs off 30 balls -- including 11 off one over.

It was a vital phase for India, whose early advantage gained from a solid opening stand by Sachin Tendulkar and Virender Sehwag was swiftly negated when Yuvraj Singh and Rohit Sharma fell in Murali's first over. For a while it seemed India might lose their way as they did against Australia on Sunday. Gambhir, who had played around an angled one from Mitchell Johnson when on 3, decided to make amends and was helped by the presence of his captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni, whose calm and sense of responsibility was the perfect foil.

They also showed they knew the importance of rotating the strike, taking a total of 71 singles off one of the sharpest fielding units in world cricket. By the end of the innings Sri Lanka's fielding was ragged, patchy shadow of the early brilliance and much of this was down to the intelligent batting. Gambhir later noted the team had done its homework on Australian grounds, which usually present an opportunity to convert the "singles into twos".

Stealing runs and rotating the strike are old Gambhir traits, as witnessed at the ICC World Twenty20 in South Africa last year where he was the tournament's second highest run-getter. His form, capped by 75 in the final against Pakistan, displayed a suitability for the shorter versions of the game.

Today, though, it didn't matter if India were going at less than six an over. At the 30-over mark they were 115; ten overs later 162 and the last

ten yielded 105 runs. It was like a perfectly worked out script, the urgency coming when most required. At 80 for 4 we were never in a position to attack. We wanted to play safe without losing any wickets," Gambhir said.