

Moore's upbeat about Flintoff future

BBC ONLINE, undated

England coach Peter Moores is confident Andrew Flintoff can play a full role in the team as an all-rounder.

Flintoff had a fourth operation on his ankle last summer, amid concern he will be unable to bowl with the same potency as 2005 when he took 24 Ashes wickets.

"The operation was done to make sure he can bowl," Moores told BBC Sport.

"The fact that in the last operation they found something they managed to fix means hopefully we're going to get back one of the best all-rounders."

Moores insisted that no time frame would be placed on Flintoff, who has not played for England since the ICC World Twenty20 in South Africa last September.

"We need to get him back fully fit to play some good cricket in the future," he said.

"We're all pretty confident the work he's put in will pay off but we all know there are no guarantees in sport."

Flintoff is due to link up with the England Lions squad in India where he will continue his recuperation and work on his batting.

"The way Freddie has approached this has been so positive," Moores enthused.

"He wants to get going, hence going to India which was partly his suggestion."

"Everyone wants to target this summer but it's a case of taking it day by day and seeing where he gets to."

Golden goal gets NZ into Olympics

AFP, Auckland

New Zealand came from behind to win the Olympic field hockey qualifying tournament here Sunday, sinking Argentina 3-2 with a golden goal in the dying seconds of extra time.

The goal, the result of quick thinking by Brad Shaw after a botched penalty corner, put New Zealand ahead for the first time in the match and guarantees them a berth at the Beijing Games.

Argentina, ranked three places ahead of New Zealand, had led for most of the winner-take-all final but will now miss the Olympics for the first time in 24 years.

New Zealand were beaten by Argentina 1-3 during pool play in the six-nation tournament, and twice had to fight back from a goal down in the final to tie the game 2-2 in regulation time.

Bolstered by the addition of captain Mario Almada, who successfully appealed his suspension for allegedly spitting at a player during Saturday's pool match against Ireland, Argentina had dominated most of the play.

They were rewarded in the 24th minute when Mati Vila played a flat ball from a penalty corner for his brother Lucas to deflect into the goal.

When New Zealand drew level with a David Kosoff goal against the run of play in the 49th minute, Argentina bounced back immediately with Mati Vila scoring from a penalty corner.

As the clock ticked down, a concerted New Zealand foray into Argentinian territory saw them rewarded with a penalty corner which Hayden Shaw, the brother of Brad Shaw, fired into the goal for the equaliser.

City do MU

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to produce the exact opposite.

But the breakthrough that United needed to make never looked like happening until Michael Carrick scored deep into stoppage time but it was too late for Ferguson's men to rescue the points.

Mashud's one

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"I don't think it will be a big problem for my team if I play another match because I am still the second wicketkeeper of the team," Mashud added.

Mashud, once acclaimed by his previous coach Dav Whatmore as the best wicketkeeper in Asia, came under scrutiny because of his poor batting and his exclusion from the last World Cup squad made one thing clear: the fact that his dominance behind the stumps was set to end.

The latest exclusion from the 17-member squad for the two-match Test series against South Africa definitely forced him to take the decision.

Mashud was not only dependable with the gloves but also played some remarkable innings to raise the country's profile in the international arena.

A huge fan favourite, many of his fans will want him to bow out with his head held high.



Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons (2nd from left) oversees a training session of the national team at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Colly hints no change

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

England captain Paul Collingwood hinted that changes were unlikely for the second one-day international against New Zealand in Hamilton on Tuesday.

Collingwood's team were comprehensively beaten in the opening match, having been bowled out for a mere 130.

Dimitri Mascarenhas and Luke Wright, two stars of England's two Twenty20 wins, are again set to be overlooked.

But Collingwood said: "This side has been successful in the past and we've been pretty consistent with selection."

Wright opened the innings with Phil Mustard in the Twenty20 matches, but England opted for the more conventional Alastair Cook in the 50-over format.

Cook averages 29 from his 1750-over internationals, with only one century, but was part of the team that won 3-2 in Sri Lanka in the first part of the winter.

Wright scored 50 at number seven on his debut against India last summer but has not played a 50-over international since falling for a second ball duck when opening in the final match of that series.

The omission of Mascarenhas was perhaps more of a surprise, given his abilities with both bat and ball.

The 30-year-old Hampshire all-rounder smashed five sixes in 52 against India last summer, before

his momentous five sixes in a single over in an unbeaten 36 in the penultimate match of the series at The Oval.

He also took six wickets in that series but has not featured since in the 50-over game.

Mascarenhas is in excellent current form after firing four successive sixes in the opening Twenty20 international against the Kiwis.

"When Dimi strikes the ball the way he does he's always going to be close to getting into the side," Collingwood admitted.

"That's the good thing at the moment because the squad is very strong and they are difficult decisions to make."

"We will go up to Hamilton, have a look at the wicket and assess it."

Silent tribute respected

AFP, Manchester

A minute's silence ahead of Sunday's Manchester derby in memory of those who died in the 1958 Munich air disaster was fully respected at Old Trafford.

There had been concerns that some City fans, so strong is their dislike of United, would jeer during the silent tribute.

But after the respective managers Sir Alex Ferguson and Sven Goran Eriksson had led out the teams and laid wreaths in centre field, the packed crowd fell silent and there was no disruption inside the ground.

However, as a capacity crowd stood to remember the dead, what sounded like firecracker-style bangs were heard from outside the Old Trafford.

Sunday's match took place in the week of the 50th anniversary of the air crash that killed 23 people, including eight Manchester United players and former Manchester City and England goalkeeper Frank Swift, who was working as a football reporter.

And yet while for many the prevailing mood was one of wanting to honour the likes of Duncan Edwards, regarded by Munich survivor Sir Bobby Charlton as the best footballer he ever played with or against, there had been an atmosphere of concern ahead of the minute's silence.

"I am just hoping City fans listen to their own club and make it a game for us all to remember," said United manager Sir Alex Ferguson.

So worried were City officials

they initially suggested that, instead of a silence, a minute's applause be observed before kick-off so as to drown out any 'boo-boys'.

But this week Charlton, who became a key figure in both the England team that won the 1966 World Cup and the United side that lifted the European Cup two years later, said it would be wrong to honour his late team-mates by using the "lowest common denominator".

Ferguson, seemingly implying City fans couldn't be trusted to behave responsibly, criticised the scheduling of a derby in this week of all weeks.

"When I saw what the fixture was at this time at the beginning of the season I said 'who the hell chose that?'," he told the Sunday Express.

"It puts pressure on the clubs. We could easily have had Middlesbrough at home or something like that."

Back in 1958, the disaster which helped make United a club known around the world, took place when the team was returning from a European Cup match against Red Star Belgrade.

Their airplane had stopped to refuel in Munich when the crash happened after a failed take-off.

United's youthful side of the time were nicknamed the 'Busby Babes' in honour of then manager Sir Matt Busby, who had defied an instruction from the Football Association banning English clubs from playing in Europe.

The Scot's side were back-to-back English champions and well-positioned to make it a hat-trick

with many believing they were on course to be United's greatest team.

Sunday's match saw United play in an old-fashioned strip, with no names on the back of their shirts and no sponsors' logos anywhere to be seen on either team's kit, a reminder of a simpler and, for some fans, better age.

Yet in a week where the English Premier League openly disused plans to play matches as far as field as Asia and the United States, there was no disguising just how much football had changed in the last 50 years.

Abahani's

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Bangladesh National Sports Council chairman and Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed, who was introduced to the finalists before the match, later distributed trophies as chief guest.

Bangladesh Olympic Association acting secretary-general Kutubuddin Ahmed and tournament organisers Mohammed Sporting Club officials were also present.

Yellow cards: Siraji (Abahani) and Monu (Arambagh)

Teams

Abahani: Biplob, Siraji, Nazrul, Pradip, Wali, Zahed, Joy (Mintu), Abul, Ujjal, Tipu (Robin) and Emily. Arambagh: Piru, Imu, Ramjan, Wahid, Akram, Ratan, Monu, Juku, Domenic, Iddi and Liton. Referee: Abdul Hannan.

Xavi the saviour

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late on with Capel, a product of Sevilla's impressive youth academy, going agonisingly close after an incredible solo run.

Earlier, Villarreal reclaimed third place with a last-gasp goal from Guille Franco clinching a 1-0 win over Real Murcia on Saturday.

"We have taken three points from a very difficult ground something that Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid didn't manage," said Villarreal coach Manuel Pellegrini.

Villarreal move three points above Espanyol, in action against Recreativo Huelva on Sunday, although they were indebted to Mexican striker Franco for a 93rd minute winner.

Troubled Deportivo La Coruna shared a 1-1 draw with Getafe that does little for either team.

Deportivo lie 15th a point from the relegation zone while Getafe stay 11th in mid-table obscurity.

Lee sees the bright side

PTI, Melbourne

Fast bowler Brett Lee has expressed confidence that his board and BCCI would reach an agreement to allow the Australian cricketers play in the cash-rich Indian Premier League.

"If the opportunity comes up, then great, the IPL poses a brilliant opportunity for Australian and other world cricketers to go out there and play in the Twenty20 form," Lee was quoted as saying by 'Sunday Telegraph'.

"I'm sure it's going to all work out and people will be very happy with the outcome," Lee said.

Indian board and Cricket Australia were locked on a sponsorship dispute that threatens to deny Aussie cricketers to play in the Twenty20 competition which starts on April 18.

CA does not want its players to endorse IPL sponsors which would compete with its own sponsors as the league would be telecast in Australia.

Ricky Ponting has laughed off his board's position, saying since there was no protection of CA's sponsors when Australian cricketers play in English County championship, there could not be such condition in case of IPL which he said should be treated as a domestic tournament of India.

Andrew Symonds had also criticised his board for coming in the way of cricketers' joining the IPL, saying CA's position that Australians cannot play for teams whose sponsors are competitors of Cricket Australia sponsors was unreasonable.

Woodgate believes in Ramos

INTERNET, undated

Jonathan Woodgate believes Tottenham boss Juande Ramos is a 'proper manager' who will bring out the best in him.

The England centre-half is eager to make up for lost time after injuries blighted his spells at Newcastle and Real Madrid.

Woodgate told the Ham&High: "He looks the part, the way he talks, and he's good. The manager has won cups in Spain, two Uefa Cups in a row, and he has done ever so well."

"He's won the Spanish Cup and now he is doing well in the league. Every manager has different ways but I am enjoying the way things are."

"We are going in the right direction and that's why I came to Spurs. The manager, the players, you can see what they are trying to build. It is like when I was at Leeds and these new players came in and I was excited."

ITF tennis

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Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Youth and Sports Mahbub Jamil will formally inaugurate the eight-day meet tomorrow on the first day of main draw. Tournament sponsors Dhaka Bank Limited vice-president Alif Hossain Sarker will be present as special guest.

A total of 175 players including 65 girls from 26 countries along with hosts Bangladesh are taking part in the four events -- boys' singles, girls' singles, girls' singles and girls' doubles.

An eight-member team comprising four boys and four girls are representing Bangladesh.

The singles champion of the meet will earn 60 ITF points, the doubles champions 50 points, singles runner-up 45 points and doubles runners-up 30 points, which will be added to the world ranking.

Of total Tk 6,50,000 budget, Dhaka Bank will provide Tk 5,00,000.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

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against Kanika-Seema duo in the doubles final. The mixed-doubles will be decided when Kanika and Sumon take on Seema-Parash pair.

The men's competition reached the semifinals with Parash, Rais, Javed and Hannan reaching the last four. The men's doubles pairing in the semis are Parash-Sumon, Mahbub-Rais, Saif-Gautam and Javed-Hannan.

CHESS

Five players shared lead in the preliminary phase of the Aromatic Gold 29th National Women's Chess Championship at the end of third round at the federation hall room.

They are Shamima Akter Liza, Nazrana Khan Eva, Zakia Sulatan, Masuda Begum and Jahanara Haque Runu.

In the third round, Liza beat Arifa Khatun Moni, Eva beat Shamiha Sharmin Shimmi. Masuda beat Mimi Arjuman, Zakia beat Rokshana Tidi and Runu beat Hamida Rahman.

DUATHLETICS

UNB: The 39th inter-hall annual athletics competition of Dhaka University concluded at the central sports ground of the university yesterday. A total of 250 students from seventeen halls took part in 24 events.

Ponting puzzled, Dhoni delighted

CRICINFO, undated



Ricky Ponting is still working out how to tackle Ishant Sharma. You could say he is a bit puzzled. The Australian captain admitted as much as Ishant waited to talk about his spoils at the post-match media briefing.

"He's been a big improver for India through this tour", Ponting said of Ishant, who has already got him thrice this summer. The memories of WACA where Ishant picked him twice in the slips during the Test series is still haunting Ponting and he once again had no answer to Ishant's poser on Sunday.

It is no surprise that Ishant knows the value of having the number of the one of the best batsman of this decade. "Ponting is one my favorite batsmen and if you get the batsman complimenting you, it feels good," Sharma explained modestly.

Even if he was taking the new ball for the first time in the ODIs Ishant had fast tracked his growth as bowler on the first leg of the tour to understand and deal with the pressures of sharing the new ball. Obviously, he stuttered a touch initially. His first ball was a no ball, the fifth was a wide and in between Hayden edged one just above the outstretched hands of Rohit Sharma at the third slip. Next over a still-settling Ishant was whipped for 18 runs which included three fours from Hayden's bat.

"After that over Dhoni told me to just stick to my plans. He felt I was trying to do something else and instead I should do what I had to. I calmed down from there onward", Ishant recalled of those nervous moments.

He recoiled well to pick three top-order wickets in Hayden, Ponting and Andrew Symonds to effectively turn the match in India's favour. "We had our plans for each batsman and I just worked on that. For Ponting, it was to bowl to him on the fourth stump."

Ponting reckons Ishant is one of the few right-arm fast bowlers who can bring the ball in and that makes him a difficult proposition. "He's a little bit different in the fact that he probably brings the ball back into right-handers more than most right-arm bowlers that we've faced. Normally as a right-handed batsman you usually only get the ball coming back in from left-armers. He's tall, he hits the deck pretty hard and he gets a little bit of inconsistent bounce off the wicket."

Ponting said Ishant has the variety that can also trouble the left-handers and compared him to the Makhaya Ntini in that respect. "He's looked dangerous. With the angles he creates he can be pretty dangerous against the left-handers as well and he swings the ball away from them, a bit like Ntini does."

When asked if the workload has been an issue, Ishant said he was fine even if he felt a "little tired" at the end of today's encounter. "I was a bit tired and I had stomach aches but I have bowled long spells and my stamina is improving."

Meanwhile, PTI adds: Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni said young fast bowler Ishant

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Sharma's impressive performance in the Test series was the reason behind throwing the new ball to him, a strategy which resulted in the five-wicket win.

A delighted Dhoni was satisfied that the Delhi speedster rose to the occasion and grabbed the chance with both hands.

"He was the pick of the bowlers in the Test series. He was impressive, so I gave the new ball to him and he responded well," Dhoni said after the match.

"The pitch was on the slower side. So we thought to use Irfan (Pathan) later and he was good in the middle overs," Dhoni added.

Dhoni, who played a crucial knock of 17 not out and stitched a 58-run match winning partnership with Rohit Sharma (39 not out), said that after losing five wickets for 102 they waited for the part-time bowlers to come on.

"We were waiting for the part-timers to come. The kind of conditions we were in, we thought our chance would come and we should wait for the right moment," he said.

Dhoni said the improving outfield in India was the reason behind the rising fielding standard of this side.

"When I was 19 or 20, the grounds were not up to the mark. But now they are better. It is making a difference and the fielding standard has gone up," he said.

Australian skipper Ricky Ponting blamed his team's uncharacteristically poor batting for the defeat.

"Our batting was poor. There was good pace and bounce and India bowled pretty well," he said.

Bordeaux hot on the heels

AFP, Paris



bottom Metz on Saturday.

Lyon, the title winners for the past six seasons, maintained their four-point cushion on the south-west coast side after a 4-1 defeat of Sochaux gave them their 15th win of the season.

Third-placed Nancy appeared to be dropping out of the title race until a penalty, awarded for a foul in injury time, sealed a last-gasp 1-0 win at home over plucky Toulouse.

Nice, in fourth, host Marseille on Sunday, while Monaco, in fifth, dropped points in a disappointing scoreless draw at home to Lille.

On paper, Lyon and Bordeaux could not have been handed easier assignments Saturday - Metz have only one win so far this season while Sochaux, with five wins, are still second from bottom.

However, the respective scorelines flattered both French league giants.

"The score was tough on Sochaux," admitted Lyon coach Alain Perrin.

"We lost the ball too much in the build-up and that caused us problems while also helping our opponents."

Bordeaux began desperate to make amends for their 1-0 setback against Lorient last time out, and Fernando Cavenaghi made good in-roads by converting a 26th minute penalty.

But it was against the run of play that the striker scored his second of the match, in the 73rd minute, and Bordeaux were made to appear even better than they were when Alou Diarra scored a third two minutes from time.

Blanc admitted: "The score made it look as though we had an easy night. It wasn't. Metz came with plenty of ambition and didn't shut their game down, as a lot of teams do when the come here."

He added: "It's still a positive result for us. If we can continue as we did these past two months we should leap the chasers behind us at bay and we'll hope Lyon slip up along the way."

Lyon's 4-1 win over Sochaux was similarly flattering and will have left Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson, in attendance at the Gerland stadium, optimistic ahead of their upcoming Champions League clash.

Brazilian midfielder Juninho, still nursing the pain of a broken

little toe, was one of the few positives from a side which relied all too often on set pieces.

Juninho's corner after two minutes thus gave Mathieu Bodmer the chance to head home Lyon's opener, and Bodmer struck again after picking up a rebound from Juninho in the 76th minute to beat Teddy Richert.

Sidney Govou and Karim Benzema, the latter extending his league-leading tally to 16 goals, struck in injury time after each benefited from passes by Brazilian forward Fred to give Lyon's score some lustre.

Earlier, Paris St Germain's bid for a third consecutive home win ahead of a crucial series of league games was kept in check by Le Mans in a dull scoreless draw at the Parc des Princes.

PSG's disastrous first half of the season, which left them hovering around the drop zone, threatens to return with matches to come against Marseille, Monaco and Bordeaux later this month.

Their ninth draw of the campaign means they now only have a three-point lead over Toulouse, who dropped into the relegation-threatened bottom three as Auxerre moved out away from danger after their 2-1 away win at Rennes.

Everton sitting pretty

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"We were put under a lot of pressure by Wigan but we knew if we were going to win today we would have to win ugly and we did that."

Fulham's chances of survival suffered another setback as Middlesbrough continued to pull away from the drop zone with a 1-0 win at the Riverside, courtesy of an 11th-minute strike from former Arsenal striker Jeremie Aliadiere.

Birmingham leapfrogged Reading to escape from the relegation zone thanks to a 1-1 draw at West Ham, who finished the match with ten men following Lee Bowyer's late sending-off.

Freddie Ljungberg scored his first goal in a year to reward the Hammers for a bright start but Birmingham were soon level,

James McFadden scoring from the spot after he was brought down by Anton Ferdinand.

Tottenham's steady climb up the table under Juande