

Sewta Uday enter final

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A three-wicket win over Prabhat Sangha ensured Sewta Uday Sena (SUS) enter the finals of the Col Malek First Division Cricket League at the local stadium here yesterday.

Batting first, Prabhat scored 240 all out in 50 overs with Shimul scoring 58. In reply, Jami's 82 anchored SUS to the victory in 46.2 overs, losing seven wickets.

SUS will meet Dasha Palli Mangal Samity in the final.

They patch up enmity

CRICINFO, undated

Former foes, including Ricky Ponting and Sourav Ganguly, have become Indian Premier League (IPL) teammates and publicly patched up their differences. Ponting and Ganguly played small parts in Kolkata's 140-run thrashing of Bangalore and set out to work together on the field.

"We've always got on really well right throughout our careers," Ponting said in the Daily Telegraph. "Ganguly mentioned that he wanted to work pretty closely with me to make sure we get everything right on tactics on the field."

Ganguly said any tension between the players was in the past and he was excited about joining forces with Ponting. "Things happen when you compete in series," he said, "and that's over and done and we need to look forward."

Matthew Hayden, one of the key figures in the hearings after the SCG Test, now believes the events surrounding Harbhajan Singh's race charge were "blown out of all proportion." "Bhaji is a true fighter and we enjoy the on-field rivalry," Hayden said. The pair is likely to face off again when Hayden's Chennai take on Harbhajan's Mumbai on Wednesday.

"Whatever happened in Australia was blown out of proportion and has been talked to death," Hayden said. "In fact, playing Bhaji helped me understand how to get into the mind of a spinner."

Shane Warne and Graeme Smith, who had a prickly on-field relationship before the legspinner's international retirement, are in the same team at the Rajasthan Royals, but Warne doesn't expect any problems. "We have had a fair go at each other as opponents but I believe we will jell quickly," he said in the Herald Sun. "He is a competitor and is always up for a scrap, which I like, and I'm sure playing in the same side will be fun." Smith's entry has been delayed while he completes domestic duties in South Africa.

Marauding

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and pace mattered not a jot, as balls disappeared over the ground with ridiculous frequency. When Zaheer returned for another spell, McCullum manufactured the stroke of the evening, going down on one knee and scooping the ball over fineleg for six.

Praveen, who bowled superbly in his first three overs, had escaped the McCullum onslaught for most of the evening, but he too suffered in the last over of the innings, as the first two balls vanished over midwicket, before McCullum put the final seal on his innings, depositing the last ball on the stumps over long-on. That brought his sixes' tally to 13, the most in a Twenty20 innings.

Shahrukh Khan, the owner of the franchise, had danced through the McCullum innings, and he had even more reason to celebrate as his bowlers then got into the act with equal gusto. Rahul Dravid, under immense pressure facing an asking-rate of more than 11, lasted three balls, losing his middle stump while attempting a heave. The loss of the captain started the slide, and it went downhill quickly thereafter.

Kallis mounted the briefest of challenges, lofting Aji Agarkar over extra cover for a huge six, but fell next ball, pulling tamely to mid-on. The pitch offered some pace and bounce, and Ishant Sharma, especially, exploited it, getting the ball to zip at a fair pace. Agarkar also prised out White, who had held the record for the highest Twenty20 score till a few minutes before. Bangalore's only chance was if he produced a similar stunner, but by the time he nicked one off Agarkar the contest was already over. The end came soon after, when Joshi fell to a misused pull with 29 deliveries still left in the innings.

The match may have been over long before the last ball was bowled, but McCullum's stunner has given the IPL, and Kolkata, a dream start. With Ganguly's team playing their next match at the Eden Gardens, this result should ensure that Sunday's clash against the Deccan Chargers draws a full house, and more. The IPL extravaganza has well and truly begun.

SCORES IN BRIEF
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS: 222 for 3 in 20 overs (McCullum 158 not out, Ponting 20, D Hussey 12, Ganguly 10; Zaheer 1-38, Nofke 1-40, Kallis 1-48)
BANGALORE ROYAL CHALLENGERS: 82 all out in 15.1 overs (Kumar 18; Agarkar 3-25, Dinda 2-9, Ganguly 2-21, Sharma 1-7, Shukla 1-12)
Result: Kolkata Knight Riders won by 140 runs.

Toss: Bangalore Royal Challengers. Man-of-the-match: Brendon McCullum.

Umpires: Asad Rauf and Rudi Koertzen.



RAW EMOTION: Serena Williams of the United States exults after her victory over Russian Maria Sharapova during the Family Circle Cup in Charleston on Friday.

Serena downs Maria

Tennis

AFF, Charleston

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Tennis

AFF, Charleston

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\$100m offered for five games

AFF, London

England are set to be offered 100 million dollars (50 million pounds) to play five Twenty20 matches against a West Indies all-star side, according to reports here on Saturday.

The England and Wales Cricket board (ECB) this week revealed they were "very likely" to accept around 10 million pounds (20m dollars) for a one-off match in the Caribbean that would be the richest single game in the sport's history.

The idea is the brainchild of Sir Allen Stanford, the billionaire banker from Texas, who finances the Stanford 20/20 Tournament in the West Indies, and who wants to expand the concept.

Stanford wants England to play five Twenty20 games against his West Indies all-star side, the first to coincide with Independence Day in Antigua on November 1.

And he held talks with ECB chief executive David Collier on Tuesday. "I talked to David about the first game and then how we could collaborate in the future," Stanford told the Times.

"I said that it could be an annual event, maybe we could come to Lord's in 2009 and then alternate."

"I would be happy to make a five-year commitment."

Asked if that meant a total input of US dollars 100 million, he said: "I would be willing to do it."

"The money is real and I think we will get a game."

"David is