

Vettori speaks highly of Flynn

CRICINFO, undated

Jacob Oram took the headlines on the final day at Lord's with his match-saving 101, but with an eye on the future Daniel Flynn's performance was hugely significant for New Zealand.

With Brendon McCullum in hospital New Zealand were rocking, effectively 78 for 5 with 65 overs remaining. While Oram took time to settle, Flynn didn't let the situation get to him and resisted all the England attack could throw at him.

Flynn had the added pressure of having failed in the first innings, bowled round his legs by James Anderson for 9, but by the time he walked off alongside Daniel Vettori as bad light ended the Test there were glimpses of someone with a bright future.

"He's got that No. 6 role basically for as long as he wants and if he keeps producing performances like he did first up then it is the start of a good career for him," Vettori told reporters after the match.

"He's a new guy in the Test arena and it's always easier to blood guys at that five and six level and as they get experience and mature they can go up to four or three."

Despite the concerns about New Zealand's top order, which was undone twice at Lord's before being bailed by a strong middle, Vettori says there's no need for Flynn to be thinking of moving any higher.

"My preference for him is to stay at No. 6 for quite a long period of time and hopefully, when he's ready, he can sneak up the order."

Warne keen

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[Sourav] Ganguly and [David] Hussey would have to bowl some overs in the middle. That's why we sent Yusuf Pathan down the order."

Pathan, whose unbeaten 18-ball 48 took Rajasthan to victory after they had been struggling at 69 for 4, came in for praise from Kolkata coach John Buchanan.

"He hit the ball very well, and is a very strong on side player. If we had got one more wicket after they were four down, who knows?"

Buchanan blamed his side's batting and several missed run-out opportunities for the loss. "Another 20-25 runs would have done the trick," he said, referring to Kolkata's modest total of 148.

No problem

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reports of rift are false and baseless. We don't have any problem in the team. "It is only that our performance had not been to what we had expected.

Because we are losing, people are imagining things that we are having problems in running the team," the source added.

He said Shah Rukh himself would soon be issuing a statement in Mumbai to clarify the matter.

After their loss to Rajasthan Royals in Kolkata yesterday, Knight Riders are virtually out of reckoning for a semifinals berth save for a miracle.

Winning where

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told them that all we needed to do was win games and we would be back on track," said Aminul.

Abahani's surge towards the title came quite late and despite big wins over Mohammedan and Bangladesh Biman in Mirpur, they had to win over Surjo Torun yesterday to ensure a flawless Super League as well as a two-point cushion.



West Indies captain Ramnaresh Sarwan (L) and his Australian counterpart Ricky Ponting shake hands during a press conference in Kingston on Tuesday.

First Test from today Young Australia versus new look Windies

CRICINFO, undated

REUTERS, Miami

For all the talk about a Caribbean cricket revival and a weakening of Australia's grip on the game, Ricky Ponting's new-look side have the familiar role of favourites in the Test series against West Indies which opens in Kingston, Jamaica, on Thursday.

Wicketkeeper batsman Adam Gilchrist's recent retirement, following the departures of Justin Langer, Damien Martyn, Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath, means that Ponting will lead a very different side to the one which triumphed 3-1 in a four-Test series in the Caribbean three years ago.

The hosts have undergone plenty of changes themselves in the past year -- record-breaking batsman and long-standing captain Brian Lara has retired, they have a new coach in Australian John Dyson and, after the misery of their World Cup campaign, restored some pride in their recent (1-1) drawn Test series with Sri Lanka and (2-0) one-day series win.

Those changes need to be kept in perspective, however. Australia are unbeaten in their last six Test series against West Indies, going back to 1993 and the past 12 Tests between the two teams have been won 11-1 by Australia.

Australia are in a period of transition, bedding in some new faces, but their squad still boasts plenty of experience and quality.

Opening bats Matthew Hayden and Michael Hussey, pace-bowler Brett Lee, spinner Stuart MacGill and all-rounder Andrew Symonds are the core of Ponting's side.

For the first Test though, Ponting may have to shuffle his pack a little with vice-captain Michael Clarke given compassionate leave following the death of his fiancée's father and Hayden struggling with an Achilles injury.

Batsman and spinner Simon Katich is set to make his first Test appearance since facing West Indies in Brisbane in 2005, wicketkeeper Brad Haddin will make his Test debut with 31-year-old Queensland all-rounder Ashley Nofke also in contention for a first Test appearance.

West Indies have been pinning their hopes on keeping the momentum from their positive series against Sri Lanka going and taking advantage of a perceived moment of uncertainty in the Australia side.

The hosts have been hit by two setbacks, however, with captain and opening batsman Chris Gayle ruled out with a groin injury and another frontline batsman, Marlon Samuels, banned for two years for breaching the International Cricket Council's (ICC) code of conduct.

Ramnaresh Sarwan will deputise for Gayle as skipper at Sabina Park but he too will be relying on some inexperienced players to deliver -- Jamaican opening bats-

man Brenton Parchment has played just one Test, as has slow left-armed Suleiman Benn while off-spinner Amit Jaggernauth has yet to make his debut.

Former West Indies opening batsman Gordon Greenidge, now convenor of the selectors, says it is crunch time for the hosts.

"The players must believe that they can step up and show what they are really capable of. We have to decide to be more forceful, more positive and spend time at the crease. What we want is consistency. This is something we have been fighting for over the years."

"This series presents an opportunity for players to be counted -- new players and established players," he said.

The tour consists of three Tests, five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 game.

TEAMS

WEST INDIES (from): Ramnaresh Sarwan (captain), Dwayne Bravo, Suleiman Benn, Shivnarine Chandernaul, Fidel Edwards, Ryan Hinds, Amit Jaggernauth, Runako Morton, Darren Sammy, Devon Smith, Brenton Parchment, Daren Powell, Denesh Ramdin, Jerome Taylor.

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Beau Casson, Stuart Clark, Brad Haddin, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hodge, Ben Hilfenhaus, Mike Hussey, Phil James, Mitchell Johnson, Simon Katich, Brett Lee, Stuart MacGill, Ashley Nofke, Andrew Symonds.

Yousuf rues IPL miss

CRICINFO, undated

Mohammad Yousuf, the Pakistan batsman, has once again expressed his disappointment at missing out on an opportunity to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL), while urging the Pakistan board to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

Yousuf signed up for the Indian Cricket League (ICL) last year before he was urged to renege on that contract by the PCB, with the carrot of the IPL acting as one of the incentives.

But the ICL insisted that as Yousuf had signed a contract he should not be allowed to play in any other league including the IPL. The matter went to a court of arbitration in Mumbai, which (please link) passed an interim order earlier this month barring Yousuf from playing in the IPL.

On the eve of his departure to England to play for Lancashire, Yousuf reminded Nasim Ashraf, the PCB chairman, of his promise to resolve the matter.

"It's very sad missing out on the IPL. I left the ICL on the insistence of the chairman and I did that for the country," Yousuf told BBC Urdu. "I ended up playing for neither. This matter should be resolved because the chairman promised me he would do it and it should be done quickly."

How quickly it can happen is open to question. The PCB wants to file an appeal against the interim order in the Mumbai High Court but has yet to do so.

Australia to revamp T20

CRICINFO, undated

Australia plans a major restructuring to its domestic Twenty20 competition in two years by developing an event that will be based around the Indian Premier League format. James Sutherland, the Cricket Australia chief executive, knows the tournament will be unable to mirror the finances of the Indian extravaganza, but a review is underway as to how it would work.

"We're under no illusions as to the contrast in size of the economy and even the huge level of interest in cricket that the BCCI (the Indian board) has been able to reap the benefits from," Sutherland told the Age. "There are lots of challenges, but we're absolutely committed to revamping our Twenty20 competition in a positive fashion. We need to tailor our product to our market, but we still see tremendous benefits being able to flow from Twenty20 cricket that will bring new people to the game."

Over the past three years the domestic tournament has been played over two weeks in late December and early January, with few internationals taking part for their states. The paper reported more matches would be staged in 2008-09.

AS Roma

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(1972-78). Turone's assistants are former footballer Mauro Zironelli, now a coach and scout in Asia and Oceania, Morris Pagnello and Joe DiMartino.

The workshop will start with 30 senior local coaches (mostly with C-Licence) at the BUET ground this afternoon. The delegation will conduct "Just for kicks" -- a two-day football clinic with youngsters (10-14 years) at the same venue from tomorrow where the kids will be introduced to 'football Italian style'.

Hayden

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probably 50/50 at best," Ponting told a news conference. Hayden, who has played 94 Tests, missed the weekend's tour match against a Jamaica XI due to the injury.

Australia were already without vice-captain Michael Clarke, who was granted leave to attend the funeral of his fiancée's father. Ponting said that if Hayden fails to recover left-hander Simon Katich would open with Phil James and Brad Hodge would come into the side at number five.

Australia will play three Tests, five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 game against West Indies.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

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PIONEER FOOTBALL UNB adds: Satrawja Nabin Sangha beat Abdul Hadi Lane Jubo Sangha 2-1 in an East Zone match of the Dhaka City Corporation Pioneer Football League at the Jagannath University ground at Dhupkhola. Soheli and Sunny scored in the 51st and 62nd minutes respectively for the winners while Noman netted in the 27th minute for the losers.

In the day's other match, Jatrabari Jhatika Sangsad edged past Nasrin Sporting Academy by a lone goal scored by Tapu Sheikh in the 56th minute.

The Warne debate begins

CRICINFO, undated

Terry Jenner thinks Shane Warne could do it, Cricket Australia is doubtful it will happen, Ian Healy says it would not be good and Merv Hughes, a national selector, hasn't heard from his mate. Warne's musings that he could play in the Ashes if Australia really needed him have created an immediate debate about whether he could end his retirement.

"Shane defies all normal logic as the game's greatest legspinner," Jenner said in the Herald Sun. "According to Cricket Australia protocol, he would need to play grade and first-class cricket, and he has retired from Hampshire. So he would have to beat the system, but you never say never with Shane."

James Sutherland, the Cricket Australia chief executive, said Warne was unavailable for selection "until he is not retired", meaning the bowler would have to take the first step. "It's really up to him if he wants to make himself available," Sutherland told Fox Sports News. "The Ashes is still 15 months away and Shane's been retired for 15 months. It's still a long way away and ultimately the decision as to whether he wants to make himself available really rests with Shane."

Some of Warne's former teammates were sceptical of a possible comeback. Ian Healy was not convinced, saying "it wouldn't be good because it would mean we're struggling", and Michael Slater said it was "all fantasy". Dean Jones told Melbourne radio there was "a lot of wishful thinking here". Hughes, a selector, smiled when he heard the news. "You just ponder what could be, and my initial thought was that probably he could do it, but then you have a reflection as a selector and you think: is that the best thing for Australian cricket?" Hughes told the Age. "He's going really well with his Twenty20, he's probably excited and the adrenalin is pumping again, but there's a little bit more to it than just rolling up and playing a one-off Test series."

Warne has not spoken to the selectors and Hughes said the bowler would have to justify his selection "as everyone has to". "You can't prove your fitness for Test cricket by playing Twenty20," he said.

Brett Lee led the push for Stuart MacGill, who will return to Test duty on Thursday in the first match against West Indies. "Shane is a very close friend of mine," he said in the Courier Mail, "but we should be focusing on what we've got here, and that's Stuey MacGill."

Abahani triumph

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the left-handers fell, Abahani's skipper Tushar Imran decided to wait at a Monwar Hossain delivery outside off-stump, only to be caught behind by Khaled Mashud for 13 to hand back the advantage to Surjo Torun, who deployed aggressive field settings to enliven the atmosphere at the usually tranquil cricket ground.

But after Surjo Torun skipper Nayeem Islam won the toss, openers Shamsur Rahman and Shakil Haider tore into the Abahani pace attack. Ziaur Rahman's first over produced four boundaries and it was in-form Shamsur who smashed all of them including a pulled six off Talha Jubair in the next over. Tushar Imran handed the ball to his left-arm spinners and it was Mohammad Rafique who broke through, dismissing Shakil for 11. Shamsur (29) became Sunny's first victim, clean bowled while trying to sweep.

"When Shuvo (Shamsur Rahman) got out, I knew that it was our day," said Tushar who also added that the first four overs made him very nervous. Apart from Shamsur's wicket, man-of-the-match Sunny removed Nizamuddin Ripon, Khaled Mashud, Mohammad Sharif and Monwar Hossain to end with figures of 5-13 off 8.2 overs. Rafique took two while Tushar Imran, who took the prized wicket of opposite number Nayeem Islam (57), took two wickets as well. Nayeem struck five boundaries and two sixes in his 61-ball innings but after his departure, Surjo Torun quickly folded in the 40th over.

Meanwhile, Dollar Mahmud showed his big-hitting ability as Mohammedan Sporting Club finished their disappointing Premier League campaign with a consolation 124-run victory over fallen title runners Bangladesh Biman.

Biman were in a difficult title race with Abahani on the concluding day of the competition but they were nowhere in the last game at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Another top order failure, after being sent into bat first, put Mohammedan in trouble but Dollar joined man-of-the-match Suhrawardi Shuvo to change the scenario as their 97-run eighth wicket stand empowered them to post a challenging total of 239.

It was however entertaining to watch Dollar putting the country's leading paceman Mashrafe Bin Mortaza to the sword by smashing two big sixes, one over square-leg and the other over long-on, and two fours in one over.

The right-hander smashed two more sixes and two boundaries during his 42-ball 60 while Shuvo chipped in with 57 off 70 deliveries with five fours and a six during their rescue act despite Mashrafe's three wickets in the last over to return with five for 52.

In the day's other match, BKSP finished their impressive debut campaign with a five-wicket victory against City Club at the Fatullah Stadium.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SURJO TORUN: 160 all out in 39.2 overs (Shamsur 29, Shakil 11, Ripon 24, Nayeem 57, Mashud 5, Uttam 7, Nazmul 8, Sharif 9, Monwar 0, Younis 4, Monirul 0*, Talha 1-49, Rafique 2-13, Sunny 5-13, Tushar 2-10).

ABAHANI: 162-6 in 41.3 overs (Sahagir 1, Mahbulul 15, Rezaul 2, Nafees 31, Kandamby 46, Tushar 13, Nadif 34*, Sunny 10*, Sharif 2-28, Monwar 1-31, Younis 2-31, Rafique 1-28).

Result: Abahani won by four wickets.

MOHAMMEDAN: 239 all out in 50 overs (Imtiaz 9, Kayes 25, Rashedul 20, Ashrafu 31, Rokibul 1, Faisal 38, Minto 11, Shuvo 57, Dollar 60, Tareq 0*, Yasin 0, extras 15; Mashrafe 5-52, Mosharraf 3-20, Mahbulul 2-61).

BIMAN: 115 all out in 28.3 overs (Javed 1, Tamim 16, Nasir 6, Mosharraf 2, Kapali 19, Sanwar 0, Mashrafe 23, Mufshiqur 25, Sajjad 1, Mahbulul 6, Nabil 4*, extras 12; Tareq 3-33, Dollar 1-14, Yasin 2-22, Shuvo 2-30, Imtiaz 1-13).

Result: Mohammedan won by 124 runs.

CITY: 113 all out in 35.4 overs (Rasel 1, Karim 8, Imran 12, Basher 29, Mabud 36, Sunmon 5, Rashedul 1, Shafiq 0, Golam Hossain 3*, Atiqur 5, Sunmon Saha 0, extras 13; Kibria 2-32, Emon 1-26, Nasir 1-24, Reefat 2-22, Raihan 3-3).

BKSP: 117 for 5 in 30.1 overs (Mithun 4, Inamul 43, Rahman 8, Mufshiqur 26, Nasir 21*, Mahmudul 1, Momimul 8*, extras 6; Shafiq 1-30, Rashedul 1-28, Atiqur 2-25, Golam Hossain 1-5).

Result: BKSP won by five wickets.

NOTICE: Dear readers, we made a mistake in publishing the CROSSWORD for the last couple of days. Actually the crossword below is the continuation of the one that appeared on May 19. To make things easier for you, we will reprint the crosswords that were published on May 20 and 21 later to maintain the continuity. We apologise for the glitch. STAR SPORT

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. ACROSS 28 Hushed 2 Idle 10 Fraction adder's 1 Was 30 America's or find 1 intro Uncle Clapton (Abbr.) 33 Candy 3 Stopped to often the 12 Wahine's greeting 4 Soun-drel thin 4 Recurring 14 Dumbo's "wings" 7 Poet sheets of 15 Always 8 Non-37 Randy events 19 Complete 9 believer or Dennis 5 Dlarist 20 Computer invader 10 Sense 38 Bewil-dered bk. 6 Ref. 21 "Hay-stacks" painter 11 Gum 39 One 7 Manhat-tan 22 Turkey's capital 13 Falling address neighbor-hood 23 Litigant 14 leater in 8 Shrewd 24 It's nothing new 16 Happy verse 9 Small 25 Energy 17 Bowlers' mecca 1 Leger-water-melon 26 Tripoli's land 28 Some-what (Pref.) 20 Physi-cist 21 Niels ADAM PIERCE 29 Say 21 Hotel 20 ADAM PIERCE 30 Dry 23 staffers 20 ADAM PIERCE 31 cleaner's concern 23 Dry-heat bath 20 ADAM PIERCE 31 Settled down 25 Region 20 ADAM PIERCE 32 Dr.'s field 26 Breather 20 ADAM PIERCE 33 Trawler gear 27 Carloon-ist's supply 20 ADAM PIERCE 35 Melody

CRYPTOQUIP XSQPBL SGH KBLXPJ VENN MCNH ECYSLZ EC LZMQRL E LBDDMLS GECS EL P NMYS ZKPY RCMVL CM XMCJL Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SOMEBODY BEAT A MARINE MAMMAL IN A CONTEST, COULD YOU SAY HE DEFEATED THE PORPOISE? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals T

Chennai, Mumbai choke

FROM PAGE 17

were undone by a couple of sensational catches -- Morkel backpedalling and completing a skier inches from the square-leg boundary, hurting his head in the process, and Patel, behind the stumps, pulling off a full-length dive to complete a one-handed take.

It was again left to Rahul Dravid to survey the debris and he took his time to consolidate. Five fours reeled off his bat towards the end but Mark Boucher's dismissal -- just when it appeared as if they would string together a partnership -- hurt them. Dravid couldn't last the distance -- Dhoni pulled off a fine catch at cover -- and the tail did not have much of a chance with Morkel keeping it straight. Kumar's 11-ball 21 was a feeble attempt at making a match out of it but little would he have imagined bowling the last over to win his side the match.

In the day's earlier match, a see-saw last over -- which included a six, a four, a dropped catch and three run-outs -- allowed Kings XI Punjab to end Mumbai Indians' six-match winning streak and boost their hopes for a place in the semifinals.

Shaun Marsh and Luke Pomersbach's 134-run stand laid the platform but it was Punjab's accurate bowling at the death under pressure that brought the game to a head in the final over.

The over, from VRV Singh, began with Mumbai needing 19, three wickets in hand and Siddharth Chitnis and Dilhartha Fernando out in the middle. Chitnis hit the first ball for six over third man. The next one was wide and Chitnis lifted it over extra cover, where Tanmay Srivastava dropped a difficult catch and the ball ran over the line. The next delivery saw the ball hit Srivastava, who threw it back to the keeper and Chitnis was run out trying to take a second run.

New batsman Ashish Nehra sneaked a bye to get Fernando on strike and the Sri Lankan drove a fuller delivery through cover and it was Srivastava again who fielded the ball and ran out Nehra as the batsman tried for a risky third run. Four runs off two balls with three

wicket remaining -- Vikrant Yelgati dropped the ball on the pitch and the batsmen ran two as Punjab's fielders muffed up what would have been the fifth run-out of the innings.

With two needed off the final ball visions arose of the tournament's first bowl-out. Yelgati drove to mid-off and set off but he picked the wrong fielder -- the ball raced to Yuvraj Singh, who picked it up and ran towards the stumps to knock them down full stretch, Jonty Rhodes style, and Punjab had won by a run.

It was an incredible turnaround in a match where Mumbai looked like reaching Punjab's formidable target while Sachin Tendulkar was still at the crease. Punjab's bowlers nearly undid the efforts of Marsh and Pomersbach, starting with the first two overs.

Sreesanth started the innings with three wides -- the second racing past the keeper to the boundary -- and Irfan Pathan followed with over-pitched deliveries that Sanath Jayasuriya sent for two sixes over long-on and two fours in front of and behind the wicket. However, Sreesanth recovered in his next over to trap Jayasuriya lbw with a sublime leg-cutter. But Tendulkar chose the moment to strike form in this tournament, taking hold of the reins and punishing VRV Singh's poor length with fours to fine leg and third man. He reached his fifty by cheekily lobbing a Yuvraj delivery to third-man boundary.

But once Tendulkar was run out, when Rohin Uthappa sent him back, the Punjab bowlers smelt an opening. Yuvraj, who had gone for 10 runs in his first over, got Shaun Pollock to edge the first ball he faced to Piyush Chawla at short third man. Uthappa, the only proper batsman left, felt the pressure to go after the runs and was caught in the same over trying to clear long-on.

Then Sreesanth came back for his final over to remove Pinal Shah and conceded only eight runs in the process. That set up the final-over drama.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGALORE ROYAL CHALLENGERS: 126 for 8 in 20 overs (Dravid 47, Kumar 21, Boucher 17, Goswami 10, Kohli 10; Morkel 4-32, Gony 2-11)

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 112 for 8 in 20 overs (Fleming 45, Patel 24, Raina 21 not out; Kumble 3-14, Steyn 2-28)

Result: Bangalore Royal Challengers won by 14 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Anil Kumble. Toss: Bangalore Royal Challengers. Umpires: D Harper and I Shivram.

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 189 for 4 in 20 overs (Marsh 81, Pomersbach 79 not out; Chitnis 2-40)

MUMBAI INDIANS: 188 all out in 20 overs (Tendulkar 65, Nayar 27, Jayasuriya 20, Smith 20; Yuvraj 2-12, Sreesanth 2-35)

Result: Kings XI Punjab won by 1 run. Man-of-the-match: Shaun Marsh. Toss: Mumbai Indians.

Umpires: B Bowden and GA Pratapkumar.

AFC assures

FROM PAGE 17

event. Prince Aga Khan, who leaves Dhaka today after a brief visit, might meet the BFF president before his departure this morning. Salahuddin, who visited Thailand en route to Malaysia, added that Bangladesh will play two preparation matches in Bangkok for next month's SAFF Championship in Maldives and Sri Lanka.

"Our matches are on May 27 and 29 and the Thai authority had offered us the national team. But the team management believe it would be unwise to play a strong team before the SAFF. So we have decided to play against club teams for preparation."

The national team, training under coach Abu Yusuf, are expected to leave Dhaka on May 26. They will play their first warm-up match against the combined foreigners team in Narshingdi today and the second one in Dhaka against Sporting Independent, a team of local players featuring ex-national stars and the promising ones knocking at the door.