

## Another delay for Flintoff

AFP, London

Andrew Flintoff is set to miss England's forthcoming one-day series against New Zealand as he continues his recovery from a side strain.

England will announce their squad for the series on Friday, ahead of one Twenty20 international and five one-day internationals starting at Old Trafford on June 13.

They were hoping to include the 30-year-old in their plans after he was ruled out of the Test series against New Zealand with the side strain.

But Flintoff admitted he is only halfway through a six-week recovery programme which would effectively rule him out for the whole of the one-day series.

"I don't know the exact dates of the one-day series but I've still got a few weeks before I'm fit so I'm not sure what the chances are of me being fit for that. I saw Geoff Miller and Peter Moores last week and they're not going to rush me back," Flintoff said.

"I've not got a fixed date yet on when I can play and I think I'll know more once I start doing more running and then get back into the cricket again."

"These things have a history of taking six weeks and it will be three weeks on Thursday since I did it."

Flintoff could still be fit for the opening Test against South Africa at Lord's starting on July 11, which could be his first Test appearance for 18 months.

## Mumbai end

FROM PAGE 17

**MUMBAI INDIANS:** 126 for 1 in 16 overs (Jayasuriya 54, Tendulkar 40 not out, Uthappa 18 not out; Steyn 1-14). Result: Mumbai Indians won by 9 wickets.

**Man-of-the-match:** Dilhara Fernando.

**Umpires:** BF Bowden (New Zealand) and SL Shastri.

**Toss:** Mumbai Indians

## Rain drowns

FROM PAGE 17

Winners of 2003 and losing finalists in 1999 and 2005 SAFF Football Championship, Bangladesh are pitted in a group with Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan in the fifth edition of the June 3-14 biennial South Asian football meet.

## Win masks problems

Cricket

MICHAEL ATHERTON

The little things that happen in the middle of a Test match are often the most telling. Two hours before the start of the third day's play at Old Trafford, Peter Moores, the head coach, held a long and animated discussion with his top six batsmen on the England team balcony. Once England had proved the futility of such a mid-innings debate by being bowled out cheaply, Daniel Vettori then had a protracted powwow with his team out in the middle, outlining the tactics for New Zealand's second innings.

There is a good chance that Vettori and Moores were asking their teams to do opposite things. We know what Vettori was saying because a roving camera microphone picked it up. But long, he emphasised, get a lead of more than 350 and England will be out of the game. We do not know what Moores said because, as yet, Big Brother does not exist in the England dressing-room. At a guess, I would say that he was discussing England's pedestrian batting on the second day and their lack of urgency in general. Vettori was asking for time and composure at the crease; Moores, in all probability, for tempo.

Up until the final day of play, when they at last found their stride, England have been outscored at every opportunity by New Zealand in this home-and-away set of matches. Even in Napier and Wellington, matches that England won in the winter, and at Lord's last week, in conditions more familiar to England, New Zealand's run-rate was comfortably superior. (At Old Trafford, in the first innings, England scored at 2.58 per over; New Zealand at 4.21.)

This presents two problems. One, it gives England less time to bowl out the opposition; two, and just as importantly, it is a good barometer of the balance of power between the teams.

England have won three games to their opponents' one in this six-match series, but much of it can be put down to New Zealand's inexperience at clutch moments. For long periods, as the run-rates suggest, they have more than matched England. Against better teams, the likes of which are shortly to arrive on these shores, such an imbalance in run-rates is a short cut to defeat.

Whatever was said to the teams clearly had little effect. England lost six wickets for 50 before lunch, and New Zealand were routed for 114. It is not that whatever was said proved to be so ineffective, but that such lengthy discussions were deemed necessary in the first place, that is so significant. Clearly, these are two batting line-ups that are still finding their way.

For New Zealand this is to be expected, since they could field an alternative Test-match team from those who are playing Twenty20

cricket in India. The panic that ran through their batsmen as Monty Panesar found his groove was unsurprising. They are callow and inexperienced and probably need as much guidance as they can get from Vettori and John Bracewell, their coach. For England, though, this is worrying. The top six have been together for what seems like an eternity and have scored more than 60 Test hundreds between them. They are all hardened, experienced international players who should be at the peak of their powers.

Moores gave a bullish press conference on Tuesday during which he gave a powerful endorsement of Paul Collingwood, in particular, and his batting qualities. He gave the clearest indication that there would be no changes for Trent Bridge. Fair enough, England are winning and consistency breeds confidence. There is no problem with the personnel as such. They are, as they are fond of telling us, all top-class players.

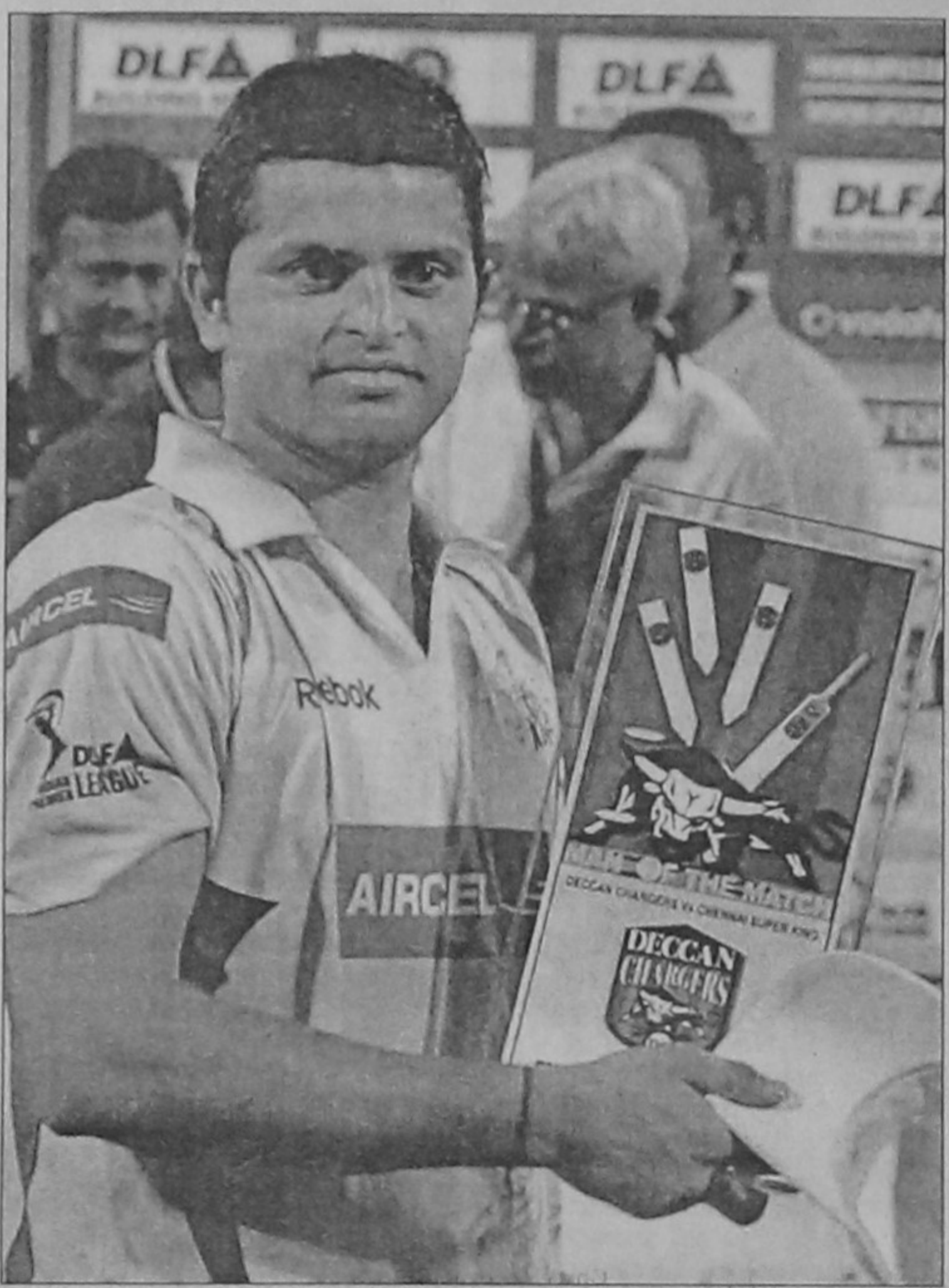
But there is a problem with how the constituent parts sometimes fit

together. An innings cannot meander along aimlessly at one pace. Top-class teams play the situation, recognise which bowlers are vulnerable, when it is time to attack, and have the gears to exploit this "feel".

It is the right tempo, then, that England must search for as they move forward and the right balance between those who offer, as Andrew Strauss does, calm and measured play, and those who can produce something more dynamic. That they can do it was more than proved in the second innings at Old Trafford, when urgent running, allied to a change of approach from Michael Vaughan and Kevin Pietersen, brought a change in fortune.

If England continue to forget those lessons, though, and return to their static ways, Moores will find, as Steve McLaren did not so long ago with Frank Lampard and Steven Gerrard, that the best players do not always make the best fit.

(Former England captain Michael Atherton wrote this article for Times Online website)



Suresh Raina of the Chennai Super Kings shows off the man-of-the-match's crest during the post-match presentation ceremony after his side's Indian Premier League encounter against Deccan Chargers at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

## 'IPL must count'

CRICINFO, undated

Though the Indian Premier League is a Twenty20 tournament, Delhi Daredevils captain Virender Sehwag wants performances in the high-profile event to be taken into account when the Indian team for the tri-series in Bangladesh is selected on May 30.

"IPL performances should matter. Everyone is watching it," he said. "I think the selectors should take IPL performances into account when they select the Indian squad."

A number of youngsters have made their mark in the IPL and Sehwag felt, given the amount of international cricket ahead, they should be picked to the national squad on a rotation basis. "So many youngsters have done well in the tournament. For us, Shikhar Dhawan has done well, so have Yo Mahesh and Pradeep Sangwan."

"India play a tri-series in Bangladesh, they play the Asia Cup in Pakistan and then there is the Champions Trophy. There's a lot of cricket to be played this year and I think selectors should, on rotation, give chances to the youngsters to play alongside the seniors."

Dilip Vengsarkar, the chairman of selectors, had earlier said that the selectors would watch the second half of the IPL to gauge the form and fitness of players ahead of the tri-series in Bangladesh, which starts on June 8. However, he had also said: "IPL is a very good concept. Young players with potential have come along. But one-day internationals are a different ball game."

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 17

Both men's and women's final will be held tomorrow while the third-place deciding matches will be held today.

**NAT'L ROLLER SKATING** UNB adds: The 2nd National Roller Skating Championship, organised by Bangladesh Roller Skating Federation, begins Friday after a two-year gap at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Ninety-six players representing 25 clubs, split into six groups, will participate in the 33 events for boys and girls.

Private satellite channel ATN Bangla as media partner will live telecast the event.

American Chamber of Commerce president Syed Ershad Ahmed will formally inaugurate the meet as chief guest.

Roller Skating Federation will bear the entire tournament budget of two lakh seventy thousand Taka.

## 'A bit like McGrath'

Cricket

REUTERS, Kingston

Australia captain Ricky Ponting praised Stuart Clark for his part in an 'unrelenting' display after he took five wickets in the dismissal of West Indies for 191 on the final day of the first Test for a 95-run victory.

Clark returned his best Test figures of five for 32 and, with Brett Lee also in impressive form, West Indies were unable seriously to assault their target of 287.

Ponting said that the often under-regarded Clark had proved once again that he was a vital part of the Australia team.

"How could you not admire what he's done? He's averaged around 20 in 125 or so Test matches, that's a really great achievement, especially when he hasn't bowled with the new ball on a lot of those occasions," Ponting told reporters after the game.

"And we're playing on a lot of wickets, like we are here, where you just have to probably go against

what you do in Australia and find different ways of working batsmen over and getting them out."

"He's been the guy a bit like Glenn (McGrath) was when he was in the side, whatever the situation



STUART CLARK

required, you know that he'll come in and get the job done for you. He'll give you what is expected and what the team requires," he said.

Ponting said he was pleased with the way his side went about

the final day.

"I think Monday we were just unrelenting. We didn't give them any opportunity to get themselves back in the game."

"That is great re-enforcement for our group going in to the next game because the Antiguan wicket could be pretty slow and low going on the World Cup games that we've played there. So we've now shown ourselves the way to go about playing Test cricket again," he said.

Clark said that the Australian approach with the ball on Monday was to frustrate West Indies.

"It was not the wicket we were going to blast them out on. We had to be really patient and really boring."

"Stopping them from scoring was always going to be our biggest weapon, as soon as they felt where they were going to get their next run from, we were well and truly in the game then."

"It's always nice to get a few wickets. It re-enforces to me and all the bowlers that we can be successful on these types of wickets, we don't just need the pace and bounce of Australia."

## Not there yet

Cricket

REUTERS, Kingston

There are two major questions requiring an answer from Australia's tour of the Caribbean -- are Ricky Ponting's team finally fading? And are West Indies at last returning to the standards expected of them?

After Australia won the first Test at Sabina Park by 95 runs on Monday, the early answers to both questions is - not quite yet.

Certainly there were indications that Australia, having lost so many key players in the past two years, is losing the air of omnipotence that has surrounded them.

They were reduced to 18 for five in their second innings -- their worst start for the loss of five wickets, since 1936 and a sign their upper order is by no means guaranteed to score runs.

It should, however, not be forgotten the tourists were without Michael Clarke and Matthew Hayden -- both

of whom are likely to start in the second Test in Antigua.

They will bring reassuring experience to the top order while the middle order looks to be benefiting from the emergence of Andrew Symonds as a more mature and controlled batsman.

Symonds, always a handy one-day hitter, looked rock solid in both his innings (70 not out and 79) and ensured there was a resilience to the Australian batting.

On the bowling front, Stuart Clark shone with eight wickets in the match, five of them in a match-winning second innings display, and has emerged as the ideal replacement for Glenn McGrath.

Brett Lee was his usual aggressive self and worked well in tandem with Clark, but leg-spinner Stuart MacGill, returning after a hand operation, looked rusty in bowling far too many loose balls and giving ammunition to those who worry about Australia's slow bowling in the post-Shane Warne era.

For the hosts, there were some real signs of improvement but also

some familiar failings.

On the plus side, the fielding was outstanding and Fidel Edwards and Darren Powell produced a superb spell of fast bowling on Saturday to have Australia rocking.

The return of Jerome Taylor in Antigua will give West Indies a genuinely world class pace trio. With Dwayne Bravo's medium-quick to mix it up and Darren Sammy as the stock bowler the seam bowling department is well taken care of.

Spinner Amit Jaggernauth did not do enough on his Test debut to keep his place for the second Test and it remains to be seen if the selectors opt to give slow left-arm Suleiman Benn an opportunity or stick with a seam attack.

Runako Morton impressed with a sensible first innings 67 and Shivnarine Chanderpaul's battling century was a reminder of his quality but the first innings middle-order slump and the front line batsmen's struggles in the second highlighted their continuing lack of consistency.

## King Marsh subdues

FROM PAGE 17

six over Pankaj's head to move to 97, and a single later in the over -- that costed 25 -- brought up the sixth century of the IPL. The pressure was getting to Rajasthan, and Yuvraj cashed in: he swivelled around to pull one for six, before dispatching one through square leg.

Had Yuvraj been on strike first-up for the next over from Trivedi, he would conceivably have repeated his sixes off Stuart Broad in the World Twenty20. He did hit five sixes off six consecutive deliveries, before he was run out off the last ball of the innings. Marsh had fallen earlier in the over, but Punjab were way past the par score of 180 initially suggested by Warne.

Chasing 222, Rajasthan surprisingly opened with Mohammad Kaif and Niraj Patel. Kaif didn't last too long, as did Yousuf Khan, but Niraj, who held his calm during the gripping run-chase that knocked out the Mumbai Indians, once again sparkled with a fluent fifty. He cracked four fours in a Sreesanth over; he worked the ball square on the off side as the bowler gave him width, and launched a slower ball down the ground. VVR Singh tried to test him with shorter deliveries, but Niraj managed to find the boundary. Punjab's bowlers had frittered away a winning position

in their shock loss to the Kolkata Knight Riders, but today they were largely disciplined and were backed up by sharp fielding.

Though Niraj kept the score ticking, Rajasthan were struggling at 67 at the halfway mark. Piyush Chawla removed Niraj and Watson, but Rajasthan were given a glimmer of hopes as Yusuf Pathan and Kamran Akmal nonchalantly blasted sixes and scored 54 in three overs to bring it down to 90 off the final six.

Punjab had conceded 71 in five overs against Kolkata, and there were chances of a repeat. However, Chawla picked up his third wicket, removing Akmal, and even the hard-hitting Yusuf, who's been a revelation in the tournament, couldn't save Rajasthan, and for once, Warne couldn't inspire anything magical from his side.

## SCORES IN BRIEF

**Kings XI Punjab:** 221 for 3 in 20 overs (Marsh 115, Hopes 51, Yuvraj 49, Watson 1-40, Pathan 1-24)

**Rajasthan Royals:** 180 for 7 in 20 overs (Patel 57, Yusuf 39, Akmal 24, Watson 22, Rawat 23 not out; Chawla 3-35, Hopes 2-29)

**Result:** Kings XI Punjab won by 41 runs.

**Man-of-the-match:** SE Marsh. **Umpires:** SJ Davis (Australia) and K Hariharan. **Toss:** Rajasthan Royals.

## Maria escapes

FROM PAGE 17

Hewitt showed no signs of his recent hip injury when he brushed aside France's Nicolas Mahut 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 to reach the second round.

The former world number one, playing Roland Garros for the ninth time, will face America's Mardy Fish for a place in the last 32.

Also safely through was Spanish fifth seed David Ferrer who enjoyed a 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 win over Belgium's Steve Darcis and will take on French veteran Fabrice Santoro.

Former world number one Marat Safin, a semi-finalist in 2002, reached the second round and a clash with Davis Cup teammate Nikolay Davydenko with a 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 6-3, 6-2 win over Monaco qualifier Jean-Rene Lisnard.

In the women's draw, Russian sixth seed Anna Chakvetadze beat Spain's Nuria Llagostera Vives 6-3, 5-7, 6-1 and next faces Kaia Kanepi.

Her compatriot, and seventh seed Elena Dementieva, the 2004 runner-up, beat compatriot Vera Dushvina 6-7 (6/8), 6-0, 6-2 and goes on to face Poland's Marta Domachowska.

However, French ninth seed Marion Bartoli, last year's Wimbledon runner-up, was knocked out in the first round by Australia's Casey Dellacqua 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-2.

Dellacqua faces another Frenchwoman Nathalie Dechy for a place in the last 32.

Later Wednesday, second seed Ana Ivanovic, the runner-up to the now retired Justine Henin in 2007, faces Lucie Safarova of the Czech Republic.

# Five finds of Indian Premier League

KUMAR SANGAKKARA

Shaun Marsh has been the most consistent batsman in the tournament; he keeps scoring runs and batting for long periods of time. There is no element of slugging in his game. He hits the ball on its merit and he hits it in areas of his strength.

I am a great believer in keeping one's shape. It's when one loses his shape that he starts slugging. Take Rohit Sharma, for example. He plays genuine cricketing shots, and Marshy is much the same, just a lot more consistent. Every single ball that is bowled at him, he treats with respect, but not too much -- just enough, and then he starts to dominate the attack.

His technique is simple and that is his greatest advantage. There is very little that can go wrong with his cricket. He plays straight, to his

stretches, and is a quick learner. Having grown up in the WACA, he plays the short ball well, and at the same time it is obvious that he is not uncomfortable against spin. Also, he has got shots all around the wicket.

When he came here, no one really knew what to expect of Marshy. He knew he might not even get a game. But when Simon Katich went away, he grabbed the opportunity immediately.

Talking to him, one realises how difficult it is for him to get into the Australian side. But that hasn't disheartened him, it has just made him hungrier. It's easy for guys like him, who have scored a lot of runs at domestic level, to think, "I'm not getting a look-in" and get disheartened, but he keeps working hard, and performing.

That temperament, combined with his obvious talent and tech-

nique, will take him far. I think he is going to join the Australian side in the West Indies for the one-dayers. I have a strong feeling that we are going to see a lot of him in international cricket in the coming years.

Luke Pomersbach can be very destructive, and takes pressure off the other batsmen by hitting crucial boundaries almost at will. In the game against Delhi he went out in a pressure situation, and won us the game in partnership with Mahela Jayawardene. There he backed his natural instinct to hit the ball, and matched it with the intelligence to rotate the strike and make sure he didn't get out. He picked the right opportunities to hit and picked the right bowlers -- Virender Sehwag and Amit Mishra -- to play his favourite shots off.

Pomers is in many ways similar to Marshy, especially when it comes to their circumstances, but

player for Australia in the future.

Shane Watson has been touted as the next big allrounder for Australia for a long time now but hasn't been a huge success so far. A lot had to do with his dubious fitness when he was in the Australian team. Now that he has put the fitness problems behind him, the change is there for all to see. He has worked harder in the gym and has hopefully got over most of his injuries. That makes a world of difference to one's confidence: when you can perform without the fear of getting injured you can do a lot more. Watson is fitter, he is hungry to get back into the Australian side, and he now has the confidence to do it.

He knows exactly what he can do on the field and what he cannot. He is a solid batsman who can bat anywhere in the order; he uses his batting skills intelligently, picking

Yusuf Pathan as a batsman has been a huge plus for Rajasthan. I have seen him come in to bat in difficult situations and easy ones, but the great thing is he has no fear -- he is confident enough to play his game at all times.

He is comfortable against both pace and spin, and even against the short ball. He is so quick in picking up line and length that he can exploit the pace of the bowler and use it to his advantage. I have seen him play the most amazing shots over midwicket, straight, and over cover. Like Watson, he is a versatile batsman. Like Watson, he has the ability to bat at any position, and come in and convert most situations into winning ones for his team.

Yusuf comes from a cricketing family. Irfan, his brother, plays for our side. Both of them are immensely talented: Irfan is the

legbreak. Even the smaller boundaries have played into his hands; batsmen are trying to do too much with him and getting out.

Piyush's greatest attribute is not his obvious ability as a leg-spinner but his character. Mentally he is one of the toughest cricketers I have met: he has a big heart when it comes to working and performing. After the first two games, where he went for 46 runs in three overs, any other legspinner would have thrown in the towel. But he has come back so strongly, winning us matches with his bowling and batting. He seems to enjoy himself every time he goes out, even if he is hit for 20 runs in an over. That is very rare to see in a young bowler, and I have been most impressed with him of all the bowlers in the IPL.

Piyush combines his bowling with useful batting, which goes



PIYUSH CHAWLA



SHAUN MARSH



YUSUF PATHAN



LUKE POMERSBACH



SHANE WATSON

different in the sense that he is physically stronger and looks to hit the ball a lot harder than Marshy. He has a solid and simple technical base, and he builds his shots on that. He is strong on the short ball, loves it coming on to the bat, and is relishing this tournament because he has big-match temperament. He has the hunger, and has been waiting in the wings for longer than Marshy.

Marshy is perhaps a more complete player at this time, when it comes to pace and spin and match awareness, but Pomers is not far behind. He is extremely valuable to a side because he can hit boundaries whenever he wants, and against any bowler. That he has averaged about 62 for Western Australia in the first-class season marks him as a genuine batsman suited for the longer version of the game. There's no doubt he is a

more polished player with the huge advantage of being a fantastic bowler, but Yusuf is from the new breed of batsmen who can come in and change the situation with clean power-hitting. He has a quick eye, and while he may not be as technically capable as the more accomplished batsmen, he is solid enough and confident enough to exploit fully what he has. He can clear the boundary at will, the intelligence to beat rotating the strike, and incredible confidence -- which shows in the way he carries himself on the field -- that helps him overcome his technical shortcomings.

Piyush Chawla has been outstanding. He has easily been the big success story in the spin department. He has shown that it's not all about swing and pace; it's also about old-fashioned techniques of spin -- flight, changes in trajectory, the googly, the slider, and the big

further to display his character. He won a game by scoring 20 off one Ishtant Sharma over, and one against the Deccan Chargers by hitting a six off Scott Styris and then a boundary off RP Singh.

He does have the stock legbreak, but most of the wickets in the tournament are not conducive to that. He has had to rely on variations to keep the batsman guessing as to what he is going to do. He has a deceptive googly and slider, and a couple of other variations he is not afraid to try. He has done very well with what he has, and as time goes by he should bowl the legbreak more, turn it big and control the turn. He has a strong future, and I see a lot of good things for him not just in Twenty20 but in one-dayers and Tests too.

(Stylish Sri Lankan batsman Kumar Sangakkara wrote this article for Cricinfo website)

his areas and the bowlers he wants to hit. Also, he has the ability of batting for long periods of time, at least by Twenty20 standards. You cannot underestimate that attribute. When a guy like him, who has almost all the shots in the book, who is good against pace and changes of pace, bats long, it helps your side a lot.

Watson's bowling is quite impressive, with changes of pace and lots of variety. He is not afraid of trying things he knows he can do. If he wants to bounce he will bounce, if he works out a player is weak on something, he will attack him there. Also, he has the control areas to set fields. His last over in his last match may have gone for 25 runs, but that happens to most good bowlers in Twenty20. He is definitely a player on the rise, and is developing every time he goes out to play a game.

## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	41	— Hall of fame	3	Summer-time setups	23	Stereo pest
1 Satchel	43	Six-pack, maybe	4	Make poison-slayer	25	Repeat
4 List-ender	44	Bankroll	5	Skater edict	26	Indonesian island
8 Chills and fever	50	Not "soft"	6	Likely vessel	27	Detail, for short
12 Coffee shop	55	Felon's light	7	Spre	28	Back talk
13 California wine	56	Sultor valley	8	Lacking pitch	29	Christmas
14 Acidic	58	Schuss	9	Guy's companion	30	Old card game
15 Grazing land	59	Minimal change	10	Spoon-bender	31	"Arrivederci"
16 Rancorous	60	Crude bed, to Brits	11	Yada yada yada (Abbr.)	35	Kidnaps
18 Wash	61	— the ramps			38	Decline
20 Family					40	Erstwhile unhappiness
21 Foot part					41	—, Mea & Co.
24 Short poetic	DOWN				47	As well as
25 Foot poetic	1	Socket in foot	19	Smack	48	Benefit
26 Tie heart contractions	2	Vicinity	22	Dressed	49	Eastern potent
32 Bound					50	Where "Lost" is found
33 Arctic diver					51	"Broke-back" Mountain director
34 Word not used in "The Godfather"					52	Has the ability
36 Short relative					53	Author of Biscagat
37 Chink					54	Conditions
39 Devilish						