Star SPORT

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Academy pile on the runs

SPORTS REPORTER

Farhad Hossain struck a useful half-century as GP-BCB National Cricket Academy notched up 441 at the end of the second day of their four-day game against Sri Lanka Cricket Development squad in Dambulla yesterday.

The Rajshahi right-hander scored 54 while his overnight partner Suharwardi Shuvo made 29 after Academy started from 340 for five made on the opening day.

Mahbubul Alam managed 28 while wicketkeeper-batsman Ashiqul Islam disappointed with only 12 as the visitors made the runs in 122.3 overs before being bowled out.

Leg-spinner Prasanna was the most successful bowler for Sri Lanka Academy XI as he grabbed six wickets for 116 runs in 33 overs.

In reply, the hosts did not open their account in the four balls they faced before rain set in.

On the first day, Shamsur Rahman slammed 125 off 183 balls with the help of 15 boundaries. Marshall Ayub also got among the runs with a well-made 78 that was laced by ten boundaries.

The pair added 179 runs for the fourth wicket.

Bolt could've gone faster

THE GUARDIAN

Had the world record sprinter Usain Bolt not begun his chest-beating celebrations 20 metres before the finish of the Olympic 100 metres final in August he would have smashed his world record by a further 0.14 seconds, according to physicists who have analysed the race.

The supremely confident Jamaican runner did shave 0.03 seconds off the previous world record of 9.72 seconds - which he had set in May this year. But the researchers have calculated that had he kept running he would have clocked up a time of 9.55 seconds.The 22-year-old sprinter also won Olympic gold in the 200 metres final with a record time of 19.30 seconds. "I just blew my mind and blew the world's mind,"

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Did U Know?

In 1948, Sir Ludwig Guttmann organised a sports competition involving World War II veterans with a spinal cord injury in Stoke Mandeville, England. Four years later competitors from the Netherlands joined the games and an international movement was born. Olympic style games for athletes with a disability were organised for the first time in Rome in 1960, now called Paralympics.

Rudra Pratap Singh
(India pace bowler)
"Anil Kumble is good captain, he has everything what it needs. But if somebody becomes the next Test captain, it will be [Mahendra Singh] Dhoni. Dhoni is a very thoughtful guy and is already captaining India in ODIs and Twenty20 with aplomb."

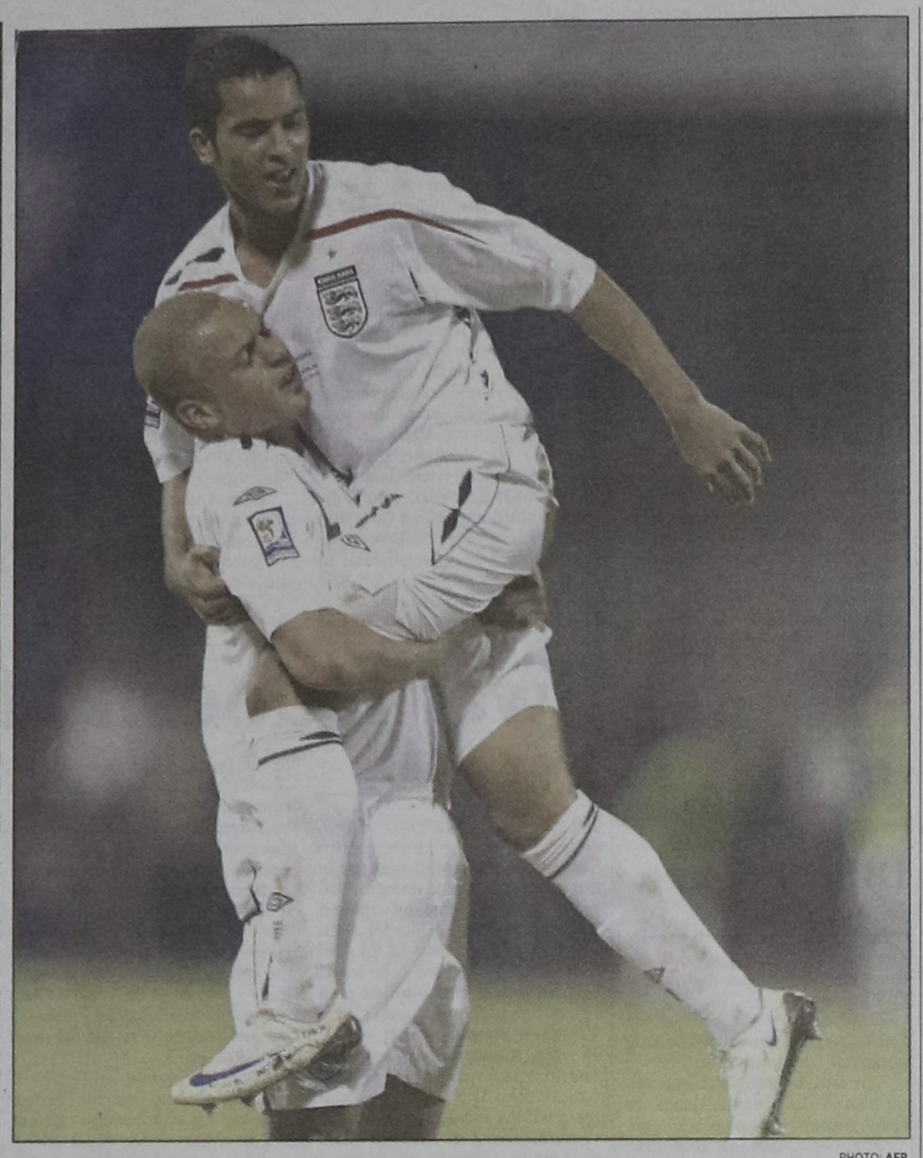

PHOTO: AFP

SWEET REVENGE: England hero Theo Walcott (R) is lifted by teammate Wes Brown as they celebrate a goal during their 2010 World Cup qualifying match against Croatia in Zagreb on Wednesday. Walcott scored a hattrick as England thrashed Croatia 4-1 to avenge their 3-2 defeat at Wembley in November, 2007 that knocked them out of the Euro 2008.

Revenge is a dish called Walcott

AFP, *Zagreb*

Theo Walcott scored a fairytale hat-trick as England came through their first major test under Fabio Capello in scintillating fashion with a 4-1 win over a Croatia side never before beaten at home in a competitive international.

England's Italian boss labelled the final scoreline "incredible" and with good reason.

Arsenal teenager Walcott's first three international goals were sandwiched around Wayne Rooney's first in almost a year as England claimed revenge for the home-and-away defeats by the Croatians which destroyed their chances of reaching Euro 2008.

"There were 11 stars, the whole team were stars out there," said a modest Walcott as a previously much-criticised England made it two wins out of two in World Cup qualifiers after a 2-0 victory over minnows Andorra.

Substitute Mario Mandzukic scored Croatia's goal. But, by that stage, Slaven Bilic's side were trailing 3-0 and had given up any hope of extending a 35-match unbeaten run in European and World Cup qualifiers that had stretched back to the country's emergence from the ruins of the old Yugoslavia.

The last time an England side appeared at the Maksimir Stadium, an untried, untested 3-5-2 formation had unravelled and succumbed to a 2-0 defeat that, with hindsight, marked the beginning of the end of Steve McClaren's reign as manager.

His Italian successor was never likely to embark on a similar tactical gamble, opting for a textbook 4-4-2 that, by the end of the night, fully vindicated his decision to leave David Beckham on the bench and grant Walcott his second international start on the right flank.

"Credit to the manager for that, credit to Theo for stepping up to the challenge," said England captain John Terry.

"In the first 10 minutes of the Andorra game Theo set that alight and caused a lot of problems," Chelsea centre-half Terry added. "When he is on the teamsheet, any defender will be petrified."

Capello, asked about the "secret" of England's victory, replied: "The secret is that we stayed 10 days together and today we played with a lot of confidence, without fear.

"I know the players and I know what is possible. Today we played like we train. This is just the start. The score is incredible.

"Usually when England play away, they don't play with courage but this time they did."

Capello added: "Theo is young, it's a good moment for him and I'm very happy. He's so fast. I had to chose one out of two (Walcott and Beckham) and this time I chose right."

The early signs were far from encouraging for England and within two minutes of the start Danijel Pranjic had tested David James with a fierce drive from Mladen Petric's lay-off.

Capello would have been equally relieved to see Vedran Corluka fire into the sidenetting after James dropped a corner from the left.

England were hanging on desperately at the back but one of the rare counter-attacks they managed to muster might easily have resulted in a penalty, Josip Simunic appearing to bundle Emile Heskey to the ground as the forward

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India rejects '09 plan

Cricket

CRICINFO, *undated*

The Indian board has rejected suggestions made during the ICC's chief executives' committee meeting in Dubai on Wednesday to conduct the Champions Trophy in October 2009 because it will clash with the "very important" one-day series at home against Australia. The issue now passes to the International Cricket Board (ICC) board, which meets on Thursday.

"We have said that the Champions Trophy in October will not be possible for us since we are hosting Australia at that time," Niranjan Shah, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary, told Cricinfo. "The one-day series against Australia is a very important fixture for us. It has been scheduled and we can't do anything about it. All the boards will have to find another solution or window for the Champions Trophy."

The BCCI is planning to hold the first of the seven one-day matches against Australia on October 13, three days after the conclusion of the Champions Twenty20 League, which it is organising along with Cricket Australia and Cricket South Africa (CSA).

However, the Pakistan Cricket Board's chief operating officer Shafqat Naghmi remained hopeful the Champions Trophy would be held next October. "The future tours programme was discussed in detail on the first day of the meeting and besides India other countries have also said they can't change their prior commitments," he told PTI. "But Pakistan is pushing for the tournament to be held in October because as it is the ICC has an agreement with its broadcasters that it can't postpone the tournament for more than 13 months."

The ICC board had, on August 24, decided to postpone the Champions Trophy that was originally scheduled to be held in Pakistan from September 12 after five of the eight participating nations expressed security concerns about the host country. David Morgan, the ICC president, said "it was considered prudent to postpone the event to October 2009, a time when we all hope conditions may be more acceptable for all the competing teams".

The concept of an alternative structure to bilateral tours, including an enhanced Test championship, with the ICC taking a greater central "ownership" of the programme, was also discussed at Wednesday's meeting. However, sources said it did not appear to make much headway during the CEC meeting with a number of boards unconvinced about the idea, especially about the extent of their ownership and role under such an arrangement.

The concept was kicked off during the ICC annual conference in Dubai in July, and Cricket Australia was entrusted with the job of coming up with a plan. The key considerations were: all three formats of international cricket should be protected and promoted with Test cricket identified as the pinnacle of the sport; "icon" Test series must be protected; ICC should look at ways of taking greater central "ownership" of international cricket outside its events or at least providing for more consistency in marketing/promotion; and the concept of a Test Championship and/or play-off should be explored further.

Another year for archrivals Abahani, Mohammedan?

AL MUSABBIR SAJU

Professional football enters its second year in Bangladesh as the second B. League commences tomorrow with the Abahani-Rahmatganj match.

The term 'professional', however, looks deceiving as none of the 11 clubs have tried much to develop the infrastructure according to criteria in the last one year. Clubs are not to be blamed solely though as the difference between the two B. Leagues stands over 13 months.

As the race begins, popular outfits Abahani and Mohammedan once again will be the frontrunners with Brothers Union and Sheikh Russel expected to give the two heavyweights a run for their money.

Although Abahani won the inaugural B. League with a comfortable seven-point lead over runners-up Mohammedan, the 2007 version was -- at one stage -- one of the tightest league races in history of local football.

While Abahani retained almost the similar side, their archrivals Mohammedan have been busy buying trusted names of the national team to strengthen their last year's mediocre squad.

And the Black and Whites harvested good as they got off to a flying start in the season, clinching the Federation Cup title beating Abahani in the penalty shootout in the final.

The strength of Abahani and Mohammedan mainly lies in the reserve bench, which is perhaps one of the most important factors to survive in a long league.

The Sky-blues, who looked solid at the back and middle, struggled for failing to convert their numerous chances in the Federation Cup but the inclusion of Nigerian striker Emeka, who was third highest scorer in the previous season with 13 goals for Mohammedan, could well solve their problem.

He will join Emily, the top striker in the country and playmaker Ibrahim of Ghana, who needs to find his scoring touch to help Abahani defend their title successfully.

"We have the ability to win the league because we can replace a player of the regular eleven with a footballer of similar quality," said veteran coach Amalesh Sen, who has been often criticised for picking up the 'wrong' players.

"I know people talk about these things but they don't understand which player is in what condition as I do. I admit that fielding Joy in the Federation Cup final was a mistake as he aggravated his injury and had to be replaced just after 13 minutes," told the former national midfielder.

Joy and Pradeep would not be available for tomorrow's opener while Sujan and Mamun are also nursing mild injuries.

Mohammedan coach Maruful Haque, in his first season at the top flight of domestic football, said that his boys are physically fit but not mentally. The young coach, however, did not go on to give an explanation about the 'mental' thing.

"We are regaining fitness after winning the Federation Cup. Jewel Rana is ready to return but Arman Aziz, who played the Fed Cup final with a serious injury, is still irregular," said Maruf who was happy to have an adequate reserve bench for such accidents.

When asked whether Mohammedan facing the big teams from as early as the third round was an advantage, Maruf thought it really did not matter.

"We have to play everyone, so when we play is not a big thing.

"If other teams like Brothers and Sheikh Russel do not better their performance than the Federation Cup, I think that the Abahani and Mohammedan will remain favourites."

Sheikh Russel's veteran coach Wajed Gazi believes a little more luck would boost his side's chances after a quarterfinal defeat in the Fed Cup.

"We dominated a one-side quarterfinal against Abahani but conceding a first-minute goal proved vital. We wasted many chances and Alfaz even hit the bar. I think we have the team to go for the title," mentioned Gazi, who did not allow his key players to participate in last week's futsal tournament.

"Our local boys have done well but in the end, all teams will rely on the foreigners. We are counting heavily on our Moroccan captain Touati Youness and if he starts scoring, we would be a force to reckon with."

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Manik asks nat'l players to behave

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

This would the first time in years footballer-turned-coach Shafiqul Islam Manik will watch a local league from the stands.

But the time won't be relaxing for the national team's recently appointed coach as he will have to keep vigil on all the 30 players he has already picked up for next month's Merdeka Cup in Malaysia.

But even before starting the camp, Manik has lost Mehdi Hasan Ujjal, who wanted to be relived off national duty yesterday.

"I called the players yesterday to talk with them before start of the B. League. My message to them was that they should reflect in the field why they have been picked for the national side," Manik told The Daily Star.

"I have told them to improve their performance, behave well and show positive attitude because the others will look to them for inspiration. A national player must act like one and earn respect from the new because expectation would be high.

"I have also got their commitment to join camp by sacrificing their Eid vacation. They have given me their words.

"Ujjal has given me a letter that he would not be able to train with us. He is mentally upset and I considered his request. It would be a loss and Ujjal said he had been

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THE WINNERS

Cricketer of the Year: Shivnarine Chanderpaul (West Indies)
Test Player of the Year: Dale Steyn (South Africa)
ODI Player of the Year: Mahendra Singh Dhoni (India)
Emerging Player of the Year: Ajantha Mendis (Sri Lanka)
T20I Performance of the Year: Yuvraj Singh (India)
Associate Player of the Year: Ryan ten Doeschate (The Netherlands)
Women's Cricketer of the Year: Charlotte Edwards (England)
Umpire of the Year: Simon Taufel (Australia)
Spirit of Cricket Award: Sri Lanka

ODI TEAM OF THE YEAR

Herschelle Gibbs, Sachin Tendulkar, Ricky Ponting (captain), Younis Khan, Andrew Symonds, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (wicketkeeper), Farveez Maharoof, Daniel Vettori, Brett Lee, Mitchell Johnson, Nathan Bracken.
12th man: Salman Butt.

TEST TEAM OF THE YEAR

Graeme Smith (captain), Virender Sehwag, Mahela Jayawardene, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Kevin Pietersen, Jacques Kallis, Kumar Sangakkara (wicketkeeper), Brett Lee, Ryan Sidebottom, Dale Steyn, Muttiah Muralidaran.
12th man: Stuart Clark.

It goes to Chanderpaul

Dhoni best ODI player

Cricket

AGENCIES, *Dubai*

West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul was named as the 2008 International Cricket Council (ICC) Cricketer of the Year at an awards ceremony here on Wednesday.

The 34-year-old left-hander, a mainstay of his side's batting for over a decade, was chosen ahead of his three fellow nominees -- Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene, South Africa skipper Graeme Smith and Proteas fast bowler Dale Steyn.

During the voting period, the gritty Guyanese played eight Test matches, scoring 819 runs at an average of 91, including three centuries and six fifties, all of which were against the top seven teams in the world.

"I am honoured to be given this prestigious award tonight and I am very thankful to God for blessing me with the talent that I have," Chanderpaul said upon receiving his award.

"A special thank you goes out to my manager, my agent and all my supporters in the Caribbean and throughout the world. It's also important that I thank my teammates without whom this wouldn't have been possible.

"My congratulations go out to all the other winners tonight -- these awards are great for the players and it is an honour even to be nominated. I am thrilled to have won," said the former West Indies captain.

Chanderpaul, who follows India's Rahul Dravid, all-rounders Andrew Flintoff (England) and Jacques Kallis (South Africa), the joint winners in 2005, and two-time ICC Cricketer of the Year Ricky Ponting, the Australia captain, in taking the award, also played 13 ODIs during the voting period.

SHIVNARINE CHANDERPAUL

He finished top of the averages with 74.75 having scored 598 runs, a haul that included a century and five fifties. He is currently ranked number one in the ICC Test batting rankings and sixth in the list for ODI batsmen.

There was a consolation for Steyn when the paceman was named Test player of the year.

During the 12-month voting period, Steyn took 86 wickets at an average of just 18.10 in the 14 Test matches he played.

No other bowler took more than 58 wickets in the same period and he was the only bowler to earn an average less than 21.50 (of those who played more than three matches).

"I have had a pretty decent year I suppose but I didn't think about winning this award until the past few days," said Steyn.

"I don't really know how I feel. Perhaps tomorrow morning it will have sunk in for me because obviously this is a huge award and it's massive for me," added the bowler, who recently helped South Africa

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PHOTO: AFP

(From left) India's Yuvraj Singh, Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene, Australian umpire Simon Taufel, England women's captain Charlotte Edwards, South African paceman Dale Steyn, Sri Lankan spin sensation Ajantha Mendis and Australia captain Ricky Ponting pose with their individual awards at the end of the ICC Awards ceremony in Dubai on Wednesday.