

Gillespie's tips to Ponting & co

PTI, Melbourne

Former Australian pacer Jason Gillespie feels the world champions' success in India would depend on how well Ricky Ponting's men exploit the poor fitness levels of the host batsmen, who rely too heavily on "walking" singles and hitting boundaries for scoring.

Gillespie clinched 20 wickets at an average of 16.15 during the 2004 Test series which Australia won to end a 35-year-old jinx.

"I remember one of the big things we did was working on the fitness of the Indian batsmen. They're not regarded as the fittest blokes in the world, and generally score their runs either walking singles or hitting fours," Gillespie told 'The Sydney Morning Herald'.

"So we would have three or four sweepers out at different times, and the tactic worked really well. To VVS Laxman and Virender Sehwag it was particularly effective," he revealed.

"Probably the most enjoyable thing about that tour for me was the different plans we used. At one stage, you had Glenn McGrath

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Did U Know?

Marcello Lippi is the only man to coach 4 Champions League finalists in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 2003 (all Juventus).



Matthew Hayden

(Australia Test opener)
"Harbhajan (Singh) is very competitive, especially in his own environment. He's a big threat to our side, no doubt about that. He's skilful and has got some weapons in conditions that will really favour him. My job will be to combat that so, for me, it's a battle I'm really looking forward to."



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live from 8:30pm



DAY'S EVENT
Citycell B. League
Rahmatganj v Farashganj (3.30pm)
Venue: Bangabandhu National Stadium

Bangladesh Boys edge Bima

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Boys Club earned full points in the Second Division Football League when they defeated Sadharan Bima by a solitary goal at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Harunur Rashid slotted the match winner in the 55th minute. In the day's other match, Police AC drew 1-1 with Basabo Torun Sangha at the Army Stadium. Khaled put Basabo ahead after 21 minutes but Police came back through Amirul's 37th minute equaliser.



PHOTO: STAR

BANGLADESH AT HEART: Members of the new-look Bangladesh national team, clad in the colours of national flag, sprint during a training session on the opening day of the preparation camp for their home series against New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Siddons takes the far-sighted view

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons hardly seemed to be bothered with the 'ICL issue' concentrating instead on the fitness of middle-order batsman Rokibul Hasan.

The Australian showed no signs of disruptions at the exodus of some national players while conducting training with his players on the first day of camp at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

"We have just lost a number of contracted players. It will take a fair bit of thinking to rearrange things. Rokibul Hassan is probably the bigger concern at the moment. He is our best player at the moment and he is still injured," said the Australian when asked about how big a problem it would be to make

the new composition after the ICL cyclone.

Rokibul had injured his right thumb while batting in the first ODI against Australia at the TIO Stadium early in this month to rule him out from the remaining two games but the right-hander is expected to fully recover before next month's home series against New Zealand.

The 43-year old Tigers coach was also upbeat with the upcoming series against the Kiwis.

"I am excited. I am disappointed that we have lost some players. But the players who have come in we are going to look at them anyway. I think we have picked a strong side and hopefully one that is good enough to beat New Zealand," said Siddons.

The ever-smiling coach also spoke highly of his under-pressure captain Mohammad Ashraful by saying that the right-hander is the

key figure of his team.

"I had a long chat with him after the last game (in Australia) and he is going to think about it. I said don't do anything in a hurry. I am not sure if things that happened in the last two weeks have had any impact. As far as I know he is still captain and if he hasn't resign and asked for a rest, I think he will be captaining in the New Zealand series. He is the one to do it. He is the key figure of our team," he said when asked about his comments on Ashraful's captaincy in Australia.

"He has comeback pretty fresh. He looks very happy to me. A little bit tired, but he looks quite happy. I am still hoping for the best of Ashraful. In the nets he keeps showing us that he can do the job."

"When he plays, we will be a much better team," said Siddons responding to a question about

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CANADA T20 CUP Selection row hits Sri Lanka

AFP, Colombo

A selection dispute has hit the announcement of the Sri Lankan national team for the Twenty20 competition in Canada, officials said Sunday.

Sports Minister Gamini Lokuge told AFP he was considering a complaint from batsman Indika de Saram who had complained after not being selected for the team to play in the Canada Cup next month, which will also include the hosts, Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

"I have had a letter from de Saram. Also there was no name of a team manager in the team sheet sent to me. So I have returned it to Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC)," Lokuge added.

Sri Lanka Cricket on Wednesday sent the team for Lokuge's ratification before it could be officially announced. The team will be with-out seniors Muttiah Muralitharan, Chaminda Vaas, Kumar Sangakkara and Chamara Silva.

De Saram and another all-rounder Chintaka Jayasinghe feel aggrieved at not being picked despite good performances at home.

SUBMITTED TEAM

Mahela Jayawardene, Sanath Jayasuriya, Mahela Udawatta, Chamara Kapugedera, Jehan Mubarak, Tillekeratne Dilshan, Jeevantha Kulatunga, Farveez Maharoof, Nuwan Kulasekera, Thilan Thushara, Ajantha Mendis, Thilina Kandamby, Dilhara Fernando, Dilhara Lokuhettige and Kaushalya Weeraratne.

Shoaib hearing on October 4

CRICINFO, undated

Lahore's High Court has on Monday deferred making a decision on whether Shoaib Akhtar has to pay a fine of 7 million rupees (approx 105,000 dollars) to the Pakistan Cricket Board.

The hearing has now been set for October 3 and uncertainty remains over whether he will be able to play in the opening round of Pakistan's domestic Twenty20 tournament.

The PCB had sought a ruling from the court on whether Shoaib was eligible to play domestic and international cricket without paying the fine. The board hit Shoaib, 33, with the punishment last month after he criticised the PCB over its failure to award him a central contract. He was initially banned by the PCB for five years, but the sentence was subsequently suspended by the court.

"Since Akhtar's lawyer was not in the court today, the judge has postponed the hearing," PCB lawyer Tafazzul Rizvi told reporters after the short hearing. "Early October was the earliest possible date that the judge could give."

Shoaib, who has just finished an unsuccessful two-match stint with Surrey in England, is due to turn out for Islamabad Leopards in Pakistan's domestic Twenty20 tournament, which begins in Lahore on October 4. The board maintains that if the dispute over the fine is not settled when the court next meets then he will not be able to play.

New-look Tigers start training

Press embargo on Ashraful

Cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

It was in some ways something different when the Tigers' training camp for the upcoming home series against New Zealand got underway at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

For a change the camp began in a sombre mood with the players clad in red and green national colours and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) making every effort of keeping its players, especially captain Mohammad Ashraful away from the eager press.

Ashraful, who returned from England just in the morning and immediately joined the camp, was barred by the board from having an encounter with the reporters for obvious reasons. The Bangladesh captain was tipped as the man behind the mass resignation last week that saw 13 players risked

their domestic and international careers by signing for the banned Indian Cricket League (ICL) which has put the board in a spot of bother on international scene.

The embargo on Ashraful was an effort to recover from the turbulent last week when the board banned the 13 rebel cricketers for 10 years each that included seven contracted players.

Although it was customary for the captain to talk to the reporters on the first day of the training before a series, board officials confirmed that he was not in a position to talk at the moment.

"This is a special situation and he (Ashraful) has just returned from England. We want to talk with him (Ashraful) first and then he will talk with the media," said BCB's media committee chairman Ahmed Sajjadul Alam while confirming that a temporary embargo has been imposed on the captain.

BCB's media manager Rabeed Imam meanwhile warned that it

would be a breach of code of conduct if Ashraful made any comments to the press without the board's green signal.

While the board made no secret about its tough stance in the aftermath of the ICL fallout, it also tried to demonstrate the patriotic zeal evident amongst the players on the first day of the training where the cricketers wore bandanas and sported T-shirts of national colours.

"You can say the measures have been taken to get over the recent shock episode. We are trying to inspire them with the red and green colours," said team operations manager, Shafiqul Haq while referring to the cricketers' new-look attitudes.

Out of the selected 24 probables, seven cricketers were absent on the opening day and middle-order batsman Rajin Saleh and Enamul Haque, the men from Sylhet, are expected to join the camp today while five young cricketers -- Imrul Kayes, Nayeem Islam,

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Brothers at ease

SPORTS REPORTER



A late flurry of goals ensured Brothers Union's first victory in the Citycell B. League when they crushed

opening round's surprise leaders Khulna Abahani 3-1 yesterday.

Brothers, who stumbled to a 1-1 draw against Chittagong Mohammedan at home last week, were facing a confident local side at the Khulna Stadium but went ahead only after 17 minutes from a penalty.

Nigerian defender Divine slotted the spotkick to give the Dhaka giants a 1-0 first half lead while Tapu and substitute Manju added 0 to the total in the last 17 minutes to take their collection to four points, level with Mohammedan, Chittagong Abahani and Sheikh Russel. Khulna Abahani stuck to three points with onewin and a loss.

For the hosts, who upset last year's third Muktiyoddha 3-1 in the first round in Dhaka, Mehdi Hasan Pashbon scored his third league

goal to reduce the arrears.

The Oranges, who fielded two foreigners in the starting line-up and made three changes from the previous match brining in ace defender Masud Rana, midfielder Zahid and striker Tapu, took early control and the pressure told when right-sided midfielder Arup was brought down by Khulna defender Nasir inside the area.

Divine coolly kept his 12-yarder on target but Brothers, despite enjoying superior ball possession, failed to increase the margin till the 73rd minute when Tapu nodded in a right-side centre by Zahid.

Tapu, however, left the ground with burning skin when the striker was wounded following a slide on the goalline as the quicklime (Calcium Oxide) -- used to mark the line -- came in contact with his groin.

The Brothers' backline went casual after the two-goal cushion but it served them a warning as Mehdi Hasan, who fired twice against Muktiyoddha in the first round, ran through the whole defence to score an excellent solo goal in the 74th minute. The 19-year-old Mehdi now

tops the scorers' list ahead of two-goal Touati Youness and Alfaz Ahmed of Sheikh Russel.

The home side made a late effort to equalise but Brothers survived the pressure to seal the victory for Wasim Iqbal's side in the 89th minute when Manju, who replaced Nigerian forward Michael Oniya, drilled a low angled drive into the far corner from the corner of the penalty box.

"It was a very difficult match for us because we had a long journey from Dhaka and had to play on we ground," said manager Amer Khan, who was on way back to the capital with his players in the evening.

"We have to return tonight because we have a match on Thursday. Also, two of our players were injured after coming in contact with quicklime on the lines. Arif's condition is not that bad but Tapu has suffered serious injury," said Amer.

The match was played in heavy showers and even the players sitting in the bench were not

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Sachin fit for Australia

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Batting superstar Sachin Tendulkar will be available for India's upcoming Test series against Australia despite racing against time to befit, an official said on Monday.

Tendulkar, 35, opted out of a five-day trial match starting in Vadodara on Wednesday after being advised to take a week's rest to recover from an elbow injury sustained during the recent Sri Lanka tour.

The news sent shockwaves across India, but cricket board secretary Niranjan Shah denied media reports that Tendulkar could miss the four-Test series against the world champions starting on October 9.

"The physiotherapist wants him to take another week off as a precautionary measure, but he will certainly be available for the Test

matches," Shah told reporters.

Tendulkar will be replaced by Subramaniam Badrinath in the Rest of India squad that takes on Ranji Trophy champions Delhi in the five-day Irani Cup match in Vadodara.

The Indian squad for the first Test in Bangalore will be named after the match.



SACHIN TENDULKAR

Tendulkar, a veteran of 150 Tests, needs 77 runs to overtake retired West Indian Brian Lara's record tally of 11,953 runs and become Test cricket's highest run-getter.

The Indian already has a record 39 Test and 42 one-day centuries and is also the world's leading one-day batsman with 16,361 runs from 417 matches.

Tendulkar is hoping to make amends for a poor series in Sri Lanka, where his highest score was 31 in three Tests which the hosts won 2-1.

The world's most senior cricketer, who made his Test debut in 1989, has been plagued by a spate of injuries in recent times and underwent corrective surgery on his left elbow in 2005.

Tendulkar injured the elbow again while attempting to take a catch in the third Test in Sri Lanka last month and missed the subsequent one-day series.

wife about those exact issues," Ponting said in Sydney on Sunday.

"Our advice was not to go to Pakistan and the advice that we received the last few weeks to tour India has been positive."

Australia cancelled a Test tour of Pakistan in March and also raised security concerns about this month's Champions Trophy there, forcing the tournament to be put off by a year.

"I've done it all day today, I've had a lot of discussions with my

SCHEDULE

Sept 22-28	Training camp, Jaipur
Oct 2-5	4-day match, Hyderabad
Oct 9-13	First Test, Bangalore
Oct 17-21	Second Test, Mohali
Oct 29-Nov 2	Third Test, New Delhi
Nov 6-10	Fourth Test, Nagpur

Aussies arrive in India

Cricket

AFP, Mumbai

Ricky Ponting's Australia arrived in India on Monday for a four-Test tour, setting aside security worries following deadly bomb blasts in the country and in neighbouring Pakistan.

The 15-man squad will spend the next week training in Jaipur before flying to Hyderabad for a four-day match against the Indian Board President's XI from October 2.

That will be Australia's only warm-up before the first Test opens in Bangalore on October 9. The remaining Tests will be played in Mohali, New Delhi and Nagpur.

The highly-anticipated tour had



PHOTO: STAR

Action from yesterday's B. League match between Khulna Abahani and Brothers Union at the Khulna Stadium.

Stanford tie uncertain

Cricket

AFP, St John's

The world's richest cricket match the 20-million-dollar Stanford Super Series clash here on November 1 may be abandoned without a ball being bowled because of a commercial row.

The Stanford organisers and Digicel, the multi-million dollar sponsors of the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB), are locked in a row over commercial rights at the match being played at the Stanford Cricket Ground.

Digicel believes its five-year deal with the WICB includes the match, which features the Stanford Superstars taking on Kevin Pietersen's England, as it is offi-

cially backed by the board; the Stanford organisers claim as the Superstars are not an official side it is outside any existing sponsorship deal.

"The International Cricket Council (ICC) and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) have confirmed that they do not consider the Stanford Superstars team to be a West Indies team," said a Stanford statement.

"The Superstars team is selected solely by Stanford 20/20 and Stanford 20/20 is not willing to gift to Digicel valuable rights to which it is simply not entitled and which Stanford 20/20 intends to sell as part of a presenting sponsor package for the Stanford Super Series."

The proposed Twenty20 match, where each member of the winning

team is set to win a million dollars, has already been the subject of legal action at London's High Court, where an arbitration hearing is set to take place early next month.

This latest commercial fall-out comes just days after claims that two players from the squad created by Texan billionaire Allen Stanford, including a West Indies batsman, had failed drugs tests.

West Indies Cricket Board chief executive Donald Peters has objected to media reports linking him to confirmation of the alleged positive tests.

"We cannot confirm anything because we have no formal reports that the players were ever tested, and the Stanford people have not informed us who the players were,

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