

T&T ride on Arman brace

SPORTS REPORTER

Early goals by Arman helped T&T Club of Motijheel defeat Prantik KC 2-0 in yesterday's lone Second Division Football League match at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Stadium in Kamalapur.

Arman opened the scoring after four minutes and added his second nine minutes later to secure three points for T&T.

Akhtar to play regional T20

PTI, Karachi

The Pakistan Cricket Board Tuesday said controversial fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, if fit, would play in the national Twenty20 championship starting from October 4.

The PCB had initially said Akhtar would not be eligible to play for Pakistan or in Pakistan if he did not pay the fine of seven million rupees, imposed on disciplinary grounds.

The court will decide on the legality of this issue and we will accept that when the decision comes. But for the time being we see no harm in Shoaib playing domestic cricket," a board official said.

"If the court says he has to play the fine first to be eligible to play for Pakistan or in Pakistan then we will not consider him until he does that," the official added.

The Lahore High court Monday directed Akhtar to appear before it on October 3 on an application filed by the PCB asking the court to give a clear cut directive whether the fast bowler should be allowed to play without first paying the fine.

A PCB-appointed tribunal headed by a former judge of the Lahore High court had reduced a five-year ban on Akhtar in June that was imposed by the board in March for several instances of breach of discipline.

But the tribunal asked Akhtar to pay the fine which he has not done as yet.

Akhtar has refused to pay the fine insisting that since he has filed a writ petition in court against the fine and ban, the matter will be decided when the court hears his case and gives a decision.

The pacer has been named in Islamabad team for the Twenty20 tournament which is one of the most popular domestic events in Pakistan.



Yorkshire and England great Darren Gough waves a final goodbye to the crowd after Saturday's county game against Somerset in Scarborough..

Curtains for Gough

Cricket

AFP, London

Former England fast bowler Darren Gough's first-class cricket career came to an end Monday after he was left out of the Yorkshire squad for their final County Championship match of the season.

Yorkshire captain Gough, 38, was omitted from the 13-man party for their match away to champions Sussex starting on Wednesday, which could determine the relegation-threatened county's status.

A Yorkshire statement said: "Yorkshire's survival in the LV County Championship Division One hinges on the last round of matches as they head for Hove this week with Jonathan Bairstow set to make his debut, but minus skipper Darren Gough, who has played his last first-class game of cricket."

Gough had already announced this would be his final season, after suffering a series of nagging injuries in the county championship summer.

And following Monday's announcement, he told BBC Radio Five Live: "I wasn't disappointed because I picked the team!"

"Some people said I should go for the romantic ending but it's not about me, it's about Yorkshire staying up."

"I really went back to the old times in my first spell against Somerset last week and anyone who sees it will know what I mean."

"That really took it out of me and I was struggling."

Gough, who now seems set to join a growing band of former England players in pursuing a media career, said he could not see himself becoming a coach at Yorkshire where ex-England batsman Martyn Moxon heads up the backroom staff.

"It was very emotional for me coming off the other day thinking it could be my last game for Yorkshire," he said.

"I would like to keep in touch with Yorkshire but I don't think I'll be a coach there, it's not something I want to do, but an ambassador's role would be ideal."

After what turned out to be his final match, against title-chasing Somerset at the Yorkshire ground of Scarborough last weekend, Gough said he was pleased to have got one over on former Australia batsman Justin Langer.

"When I look back I'm glad my last wicket was Justin Langer. I've had some great battles against him and it's nice to know my last wicket in Yorkshire was someone as good as him."

In 58 Tests between 1994 and 2003, Gough took 229 wickets at an average of 28.39, placing him ninth in England's all-time list, and he won fans all around the world as much because of his lively personality as his bowling.

Gough, who also had a three-year spell with Essex before rejoining Yorkshire as captain in 2007, took 855 first-class wickets at 27.15 apiece with a best of seven for 28.

He bows out as England's most successful one-day international bowler, with 234 wickets from 158 matches at an average of 26.29 and a best of five for 44.

'Spin should turn series'

PTI, Melbourne

Former off-spinner Ashley Mallett has cautioned Australia against relying too much on their pace attack when they take on India, saying the novice spin duo of Bryce McGain and Jason Krejza will have an important role to play in the four-Test series.

With a lineup that boasts of Brett Lee, Stuart Clark and Mitchell Johnson, Australia would be tempted to rely massively on pace to take bulk of the wickets but Mallett said he won't be surprised if India prepares a pitch tailor-made for the spinners.

"If they think they are going to win it with pace they won't because the Indians are going to prepare absolute turners," Mallett told AAP. "From what I think might happen they will look at Australia's attack and there are two inexperienced spinners so they will try to pit their two spinners against our two spinners," he added.

Mallett, who scalped 28 wickets at 19.10 in five Tests during Australia's 1969-70 tour, said although McGain and Krejza lack experience, they have the potential to wreck havoc on the Indian squad.

"You never know, they are untried," Mallett said.

"McGain had a terrific season and the other guy, well figures-wise wasn't that impressive but he does give it a bit of a rip so he has a real chance. But you never know, you throw a couple of guys in the deep end and you see what happens," he added.

Another former Australia leg-spinner Kerry O'Keefe, who worked with McGain at the Academy a decade ago, echoed Mallett's views.

"I'm still bullish about Bryce on those pitches but it's going to be tough. I think he can do a job on particular pitches. He's a terrific fella," O'Keefe said.

ICL hints at legal action

PTI, London

The Indian Cricket League (ICL) might take legal action against the International Cricket Council (ICC) if the world body does not take up its application seeking 'official status' by next week.

Jeremy Roberts, the ICL's counsel, said his clients were mulling various options if the ICC does not take up the matter soon.

"Our clients still want to coexist peacefully with the Indian Premier League and they want to work with the national boards. They are hoping to receive a response from the ICC over the next week or so. If that doesn't materialise, they will be considering their options closely," Roberts was quoted as saying by "The Telegraph".

ICL Business Head Himanshu Mody had said on September 16 in New Delhi that the ICC has been treating their application for recognition in a tardy manner and if they don't hear soon from the world body, the 'rebel' league would look for other options.

"We had first applied for recognition in April. But till now nothing concrete has come out. I feel the ICC is trying to delay the matter, they had last sent a letter asking why did we start the league and like that."

"We had recently sent a reply but they are acting in a tardy manner," he had said.

Chinese stars crash out

AFP, Beijing

Olympic semifinalist Li Na and compatriot Peng Shuai crashed out of the China Open in the first round on Tuesday, on a disastrous day for the host nation.

In the men's draw in Beijing, former world number one Juan Carlos Ferrero and last year's finalist Tommy Robredo both eased into the second round.

Li, China's highest-ranked player who reached the fourth round of the US Open, slipped to a 6-1, 7-6 defeat against Italy's Francesca Schiavone in just under two hours.

Peng lost 7-5, 6-4 to Russian qualifier Alla Kudryavtseva, who made headlines by beating Maria Sharapova in the second round of Wimbledon this year.

A new era: Lee

FROM PAGE 17 problems between the two sets of players.

"The controversy is behind us," he said. "That's happened, we've dealt with that pretty well."

"It's a new leaf. We're turning over a new page in our book, and that is coming over here to play tough, fair, hard, aggressive cricket."

Australia play a four-day practice match in Hyderabad from October 2.

The first Test starts in Bangalore on October 9, followed by back-to-back matches in Mohali, New Delhi and Nagpur.

'Almost same attack'

Cricket

CricketInfo, undated

Gautam Gambhir says India cannot claim favouritism in the upcoming Test series despite Australia fielding a relatively inexperienced squad by Australian standards. The visitors have lost several key men since their series win in India in 2004-05 and their 15-man squad includes four uncapped players and four who have played 11 or fewer Tests.

Australia's captain Ricky Ponting has conceded his side is far less experienced than India, who could potentially start the series with as many as eight players with more than 50 Tests under their belts. But Gambhir pointed out there were few differences to the Australia squad that beat India 2-1 in Australia earlier this year.

"If you look at the Australian bowling attack, it is pretty similar to the one we played against when we toured there," Gambhir told CNN-IBN. "The only difference is that they don't have the experience of a spinner such as Shane Warne or Stuart MacGill."

"In any case when you play against a team like Australia, you have to play to the best of your ability. They are tough to beat and they always play to the best of their ability. You just cannot think of beating them by playing one or two sessions well. You have to be at the top of your game throughout the five days."

Both teams are hoping for a friendlier series than the contests in Australia, where the cricket was often overshadowed by on-field and off-field controversies. Gambhir said it was important India were mentally prepared for a rematch.

"You don't want to be playing a weak opposition. Australia is the toughest series for any cricketer," he said. You have to be fully ready mentally to take anything on. You should be prepared for everything that comes at you and at times give it back.

Gambhir's debut Test four years ago remains the only one he has played against Australia. He is entering the series in fine form having struck three half-centuries in the recent three-match series in Sri Lanka but he was frustrated at his failure to go on and reach triple figures.

"Hitting 300 runs in three Test matches is very satisfying, but I still think I should have got more runs," he added. "You don't get these kind of opportunities when you're playing Test cricket. Test cricket is all about settling in and getting big runs -- as many as possible."

On Monday Australia arrived in Jaipur, where they will train and play the first of their two warm-up matches. The Test series begins on October 9 in Bangalore.

Old Trafford to be new

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

Lancashire County Cricket Club announced plans Monday for a major redevelopment of their Old Trafford home which they hope will see it once again become a regular Ashes venue.

Old Trafford has staged Test matches since 1884 and witnessed some extraordinary contests, including a nailbiting draw during the last Ashes campaign in England four years ago when 10,000 fans had to be locked out on the final morning.

But all that history and tradition counted for nothing with officials at the England and Wales Cricket Board when they controversially decided not to give the ground a Test match during next year's Australia tour.

Instead Cardiff, which is staging its first Test, has an Ashes match while Old Trafford, which shares its name with the nearby home of football giants Manchester United, must wait until 2011 before its next five-day fixture.

And with the likes of Hampshire's Rose Bowl ground and Durham's Riverside in the running, the competition to stage Test cricket in England is fiercer now than it has ever been.

The greatest planned change at Old Trafford is set to see a new larger square with pitches running north to south, rather than east west as is currently the case.

On the field, a new drainage system based on the successful design at Lord's will, it is hoped, lead to faster drainage and thereby allow play to commence earlier, at a 151-year-old venue synonymous with rain, than happens at present.

Two new grandstands will ensure a capacity of 15,000 capable of rising to 25,000 with temporary seating, with floodlights also a feature.

The executive of Trafford council voted unanimously Monday to approve the proposals and a planning application will be lodged imminently with a view to starting work in early 2009.

"The proposals come at a time of fierce competition for the rights to stage international Test matches which has recently seen the ground, and the region, fail to secure any for the foreseeable future," said a Lancashire statement.

"The significant investment being made in the new facilities will ensure that Old Trafford regains its rightful place on the international Test match circuit in time for the 2013 Ashes Test."

Lancashire chief executive Jim Cumbers said: "The Old Trafford brand has a massive standing in world cricket."

"We will work towards delivering a scheme which will have at its heart a new stadium fit for the next 150 years, and which will be recognised as world-class standard, fit for the UK's greatest sporting city region and serving the huge cricketing fanbase in the north west."

Bhajji to let ball do the talking

FROM PAGE 17

"I'm very passionate. I try and give my best shot all the time and I get too involved."

"When someone says something to me, I take it very personally."

"But I have learnt that it is better to bowl well, take wickets, play the game hard and win the game rather than say something in return or react to what someone else says."

Harbhajan is relishing the chance to face Australia again.

"They are a very competitive side, there is no doubt about that," he added.

"But, I'm looking forward to playing them and I'm sure this will be another great series."

"Hopefully we will all play in the spirit of the game and enjoy the series."

The Punjab player has had particular success against the Australians, picking up 32 wickets

in the memorable three-Test series in 2000-01 in India.

"There is always the motivation to do well against the number one team in the world," he said.

"They keep throwing you challenges and you have to respond to it. But we believe that they can be beaten and we have proved that in the past -- we have beaten them at home and in Australia as well -- and we have the capability and the talent to beat them."

'We do not need Roy'

FROM PAGE 17

"I thought there were some positive signs for Andrew last week in that he faced the press and said what he said and probably admitted to a few of his shortcomings," Ponting said.

"But that's great, that says he's on the right track and for me as a captain and all the other players we're obviously delighted with that."

"And we hope that that keeps going in a positive direction and that we can have him back in the Australian team sooner rather than later."

Pressed on the likely timing of a return, Ponting replied: "How quickly it happens is up to him, there's some things that by listening to him the other day he knows he now has to do and it's a matter of him going out and getting those things done."

"I wouldn't have thought that'd be too soon."

"It's going to take time for him to address some of his issues and he'd probably be the first to admit that now."

Ponting conceded Symonds' absence -- particularly his prowess against spin bowling -- would be missed in India, but backed his remaining players to get the job done.

"It's no good worrying about it or thinking about it but you miss someone with his skills and his personality around the team," he said.

"He's a terrific bloke to have around and he will be when he comes back -- if he wants to come back."

"But we've got the squad that we've got, we've got some other terrific players of spin in that side as well and guys that have been there and had success in the past."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP
VJQR U OBTQOWPBR BL
DRUWZ OBRDMQDUWQ LBM U
KUC BL URDTPRD, VBSTK CBS
ZUC WJUW'Z LTC LPZJPRD?
Saturday's Cryptoquip: ON A REALLY GUSTY DAY, I IMPETUOUSLY GRABBED MY COUCH PAD AND THREW CUSHION TO THE WIND.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals F

Chittagong Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (CVASU) Invitation for Tender (IFT) details including package information and contact details.