

Kenya still in contention

Opening batsman Seren Waters and his skipper Steve Tikolo will look to cement their partnership Tuesday after helping Kenya claw its way back into contention on the third day of the ICC Intercontinental Cup match.

The hosts trailed the Irish by 246 runs in the game which they need a draw to qualify to the final and meet Namibia in South Africa next month.

The 18-year-old Waters, who was called to the Kenyan side for the match despite holding a British passport, made 65 runs in the second innings to help restore some parity after Kenya were reduced to 186 in their first innings.

He featured in an unbroken partnership of 71 with veteran Tikolo (41) at the end of play, chasing Ireland's 578 for 4.

The O'Brien brothers, Niall and Kevin and Andre Botha put Ireland in commanding position when they each posted centuries to set up the huge score.

Kevin O'Brien's unbeaten 171, which included 12 sixes was the highest score by an Irish batsman in one innings.

Blake crashes out

American James Blake maintained his dismal, winless record at the Madrid Masters on Tuesday with the frustrated 11th seed crashing out to on-form Frenchman Gilles Simon 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Simon, winner of two titles since July, pounced on 46 unforced errors to hand Blake his fifth loss in the Spanish capital and put the American in grave danger of dropping in the race for the season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai.

Blake had little to offer after losing in every one of his Madrid appearances dating to 2002.

The Olympic bronze medallist, ninth in the race for the November season wrap-up, did his cause little good as he failed on one of ten opportunities to break Simon.

The agile 16th-ranked Frenchman is riding a wave of form after winning Indianapolis and Bucharest in recent months. He becomes the first man into the third round, beating Blake as the American played after the bye given to all seeds.

Blake had not set foot on court since a third-round US Open loss, skipping the losing Davis Cup tie in Madrid last month against Spain for personal reasons.

His potential for a spot in Shanghai is endangered if Swiss Stan Wawrinka can do well this week while standing tenth in the points race one spot behind the fading Blake.

Patel extends Notts days

England all-rounder Samit Patel agreed a contract extension on Monday that will keep him with Nottinghamshire until the end of the 2010 campaign.

Patel impressed for England in the one-day international series against South Africa during August and September and has been selected for the upcoming Stanford Super Series in the Caribbean and one-day internationals against India.

The 23-year-old also topped Nottinghamshire's batting averages in the county championship with 53.88.

He said: "I'm very happy at Notts and even though my previous deal didn't expire until 2009, I was keen to agree an extension."

"It has been a good year for me and for the team and I'm confident that we will be able to challenge for honours next season."

Patel's contract extension is for one year, with the option of a second year at the end of the 2010 campaign.



Action from yesterday's Citycell B. League match between Rahmatganj and Khulna Abahani at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Zico backs Uzbekistan

American legend Zico, who coached Japan at World Cup 2006, has been giving Uzbekistan inside information on his former charges ahead of a World Cup qualifier between the two countries.

"We have gained much information from Japan from Zico," Uzbek coach Mirjalol Kasymov said Tuesday on the eve of the Asian Group A match at the Saitama Stadium.

"Japan put pressure up front but we can go on counterattacks if we break them up," said Kasymov, who took over from Rauf Inliyev after the Central Asian side lost their first two qualifiers in the final Asian qualifying round.

Zico, who led Japan to the Asian Cup title in 2004, signed up with the Uzbekistan club Kuruvchi last month after winning the Turkish title with Fenerbahce last year.

He also doubles as technical advisor to Kasymov, but did not come here for the match against his formerside.

"We have lost two matches but the players are in good form," Kasymov said. "It is difficult to change the team in a short period of time. But we still have a chance. Anything can happen in football."

Uzbekistan are bottom of Group A and lost to South Korea 3-0 in a friendly on the road last Saturday.

Japan struggled to beat Bahrain 3-2 away in their opener, giving up two goals in the final five minutes.

Celtic midfielder Shunsuke Nakamura agreed: "It's the three points that count after all. We must not be mistaken about that. We will think about winning first and foremost, not about how we play."

Japan drew 1-1 with the United Arab Emirates at home last week in a friendly -- that despite having 15 shots on goal.

Meanwhile, Japan coach Takeshi Okada said the three points were all important. "I wish that the team will always act as one to play vigorously on the pitch tomorrow and get three points. That's all," he said.

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I am sorry: Ashraful

FROM PAGE 17 runs before Nayeem Islam, who made 46 runs in 106 balls, and Abdur Razzak added 46 runs for the eighth wicket to reduce the margin of the defeat.

"The wicket was fine though it's a little bit slow but it's unacceptable the way we batted in the match. Senior players should take the responsibility. Ash (Mohammad Ashraful) and Shakib failed to do their job. Shakib made the same mistake which is unacceptable," said the shaven-headed coach.

There was talking prior to the match that only batsmen can give Bangladesh a memorable series victory but the harsh reality is that things haven't changed that much.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the third and final

Table with columns for Team, Runs, Wickets, Overs. Shows scores for Bangladesh and New Zealand.

one-day international between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium on Tuesday.

NEW ZEALAND
Ryder b Rasel 3
McCullum lbw b Mashrafe 6
Howlbw b Nayeem 73
Taylor c Mushfiqur b Mashrafe 103
Styris lbw b Shakib 12
Oram c Iqbal b Shakib 3
Flynn c Islam b Razzak 5
Vettori not out 19
Mills not out 18
Extras: (lb-4, w-3) 7
Total: (for seven wks in 50 overs) 249

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Di not bat: Southee, Patel.
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-13, 3-138, 4-172, 5-179, 6-201, 7-219.

Table with columns for Bowler, O, M, R, W. Lists bowlers like Mashrafe, Southee, Patel, Oram, Vettori, Ryder, Flynn.

Result: New Zealand won by 79 runs and clinched three-match series 2-1.

Man-of-the-match: Ross Taylor.
Man-of-the-series: Jacob Oram.
Toss: New Zealand
Umpires: Daryl Harper (AUS) and Enamul Haque (BAN)
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BCCI boss to sit with ICL officials

CRICINFO, undated
The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has been asked by the International Cricket Council (ICC) to meet with officials of the unsanctioned Indian Cricket League (ICL), the first time the two sides will have met since the league was set up in April 2007.

This was one of the two major decisions taken on the first day of the ICC board meeting in Dubai, the other being the selection of four Test series where there umpire review trials will continue.

Since its inception, the ICL has been vehemently opposed by the Indian board and had earlier met the ICC president David Morgan and sought official sanction under Rule 32 of the ICC operations manual which pertains to authorised unofficial cricket.

ICL officials welcomed the ICC's decision and said they hoped for an "early resolution". The ICL has always worked towards promoting the game and players, Himanshu Mody, business head, ICL, told Cricinfo. "We hope the outcome of discussions between the BCCI and ICL will benefit players at large. We look forward to an early resolution."

The Indian board president Shashank Manohar will meet ICL representatives and provide a written report of the discussions to the ICC board. The ICC also discussed the findings of a working group regarding new regulations to govern official and unofficial cricket.

The ICL has been pressing the ICC unsuccessfully for official recognition of their unsanctioned venture for several months. Subsequently they requested the ICC for a meeting, and hinted at legal action if it didn't accede to the request.

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White proves his worth

Cricket
Cricinfo, undated
Cameron White was worn out and relieved at the end of his first Test. There had been no embarrassing two-bounce deliveries or savage treatment from the India batsmen, and he had proved to the team he would be of use during the remaining three matches.

Despite the one wicket, White's leg-spin exceeded Ricky Ponting's expectations in Bangalore. He had zip, overspin and his control was surprisingly tight. However, White is an option for Australia rather than a long-term answer, as Ponting showed, using him as the sixth bowler in the second innings after Michael Clarke had a couple of spells with his part-time offerings.

At the end of the match Ponting said Australia had missed a quality spinner on the final day. He was not downgrading White's contribution, but being realistic. White is a batsman who bowls a bit. In his early days his characteristics -- a blond, Victorian leg-spinner -- earned him heavy comparisons with Shane Warne, but nobody believes he will develop into a world-class bowler. The team will be satisfied if he becomes a solid contributor.

White will be happy if he can find a way to relax in the game's most exacting arena. "I'm happy to get it out of the road and relieved the game is finished," he said. "I felt under pressure the whole time and was pretty nervous the whole way through."

He said he was yet to feel that he belonged in the side and was appeared diffident over another opportunity in the second Test in Mohali from Friday. Tall, strong and multi-skilled, White is unsure when he speaks. He showed some belligerence with the bat in making 18 not out from 14 balls in the second innings and was composed with the ball, but before the match he was worried. What if his first ball bounced twice?

"I guess they're the things that make you nervous, thinking about the bad things, which is probably what you shouldn't do," he said. By the end of the game he had less reason to be fearful.

White's first wicket was the most fabulous batsman in the modern game. The worsening light was a distraction, but White tempted Sachin Tendulkar to drive and Clarke took the catch at cover.

"I was happy with the way I bowled," he said. "It could have been better, could have been worse. We'll see how it goes." The figures of 1 for 88 were an improvement on Warne's opening effort of 1 for 150 against India 16 years ago, but White realises his career figures will be worse.

Imran stresses on domestic revamp

Cricket
Cricinfo, undated
Imran Khan, the former Pakistan captain, believes a revamp is needed in the domestic structure of the game in the country, with fewer teams in the fray and a more professional body at the helm.

"Pakistan cricket needs to become truly professional; it needs to be made into an institution," Imran said in an interview to pakpassion.net. "These departments [teams] are a cancer within Pakistani cricket, we need to get rid of them and replace them with a maximum of seven regional first-class teams." Pakistan's domestic first-class competition, the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, was contested by 13 regional teams and nine departments (SNGPL, the Gas department, won) in 2007-08.

"These teams should be represented by regional associations with elected members and the chairman of the PCB should be someone who is elected by the same regional associations."

Imran did not, however, blame the PCB for the Champions Trophy postponement, nor the teams reluctant to visit the country. "I don't think there was anything else they could have done to change the decision that was made," he said. "The PCB are paying for the mess we made when we joined someone else's war and made it into our war. Because of that decision we now have a domestic situation that understandably makes other teams reluctant to tour Pakistan. I don't think we can blame the teams in isolation, they were just following the advice given to them by their foreign offices about Pakistan being a dangerous and unsafe place."

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He expects India will go after him and will spend time with Ponting this week working out some more detailed plans to cope with the treatment. "I'm pretty sure they will probably do that the whole series, if I'm lucky enough to play," he said. "They're always going to try to be attacking -- I'm the new spinner, and they're trying to put pressure on me."

One area White is less concerned about is his batting. Australia's untied middle order of Shane Watson, Brad Haddin and White chipped in during the opening Test and will need more useful stands over the remainder of the series.

"I've always felt not as nervous, and a lot more comfortable and confident, in my batting," he said. "I've never really had any dramas there."

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