

Kiwis bring in new face

AFP, Wellington

Batsman Neil Broom is the one new face in the New Zealand cricket side named Sunday for the first two one-day internationals against the West Indies.

The squad contains three changes from the Twenty20 side with Grant Elliott and Jamie How recalled to the team.

Broom comes in for the injured Scott Styris, who broke a thumb in the first Twenty20 match on Friday, while James Franklin and Ewen Thompson are the two players omitted.

The head of the selection panel, Glenn Turner, said Broom had shown his potential as an international batsman playing in Australia and India with the Emerging Players and New Zealand Asides.

The second and final Twenty20 match is to be played in Hamilton on Sunday evening with the first one-day international in Queenstown on Wednesday.

SQUAD

Daniel Vettori (captain), Neil Broom, Grant Elliott, Daniel Flynn, Mark Gillespie, Jamie How, Brendon McCullum, Kyle Mills, Jacob Oram, Jeetan Patel, Jesse Ryder, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor.



BACK ON SONG: Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene, who had a forgettable series in Zimbabwe and scored just three runs in the first innings, raises his bat after completing a hundred in his second knock on the third day of the first Test against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

Mahela pleased as punch

BISHWAJIT ROY



It was not the time to watch a cricket match the day before the parliamentary elections, but still a few fans turned up at the Mirpur big bowl on the third day of the first Test match at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday.

The obvious topic all around was 'what is going to happen tomorrow', the first rest day in a Test since 2001.

But wasn't there anything for the small crowd on the green surface? If someone wants to take something from the home side then it was the bowling of pace spearhead Mashrafe Bin Mortaza who showed an exciting display of swing and seam bowling to claim two wickets.

In the end it was however the unbeaten hundred of Sri Lanka skipper Mahela Jayawardene which was the highlight of the day as the visitors tightened their noose on the Tigers by taking an overall lead of 406 runs with six wickets in hand.

Before bad light stopped the day's play, Sri Lanka scored 291-4 in their second essay thanks to a well-composed 129 by Jayawardene and half-centuries for Kumar Sangakkara and Thilan Samaraweera and when the proceedings resume tomorrow the main curiosity would be the declaration with the fact that bad weather has been playing a big role in the match.

Mashrafe along with his new-ball partner Mahbubul Alam gave a perfect start by removing the two openers for 18 runs and the home team had a chance to double the pressure like the first innings but Mohammad Ashraful's throw from mid-off missed the stumps at the bowlers' end by a whisker.

Sri Lanka captain would have been out by a yard but he survived and what was done later could be a good lesson for Ashraful's men how one batsman can build his innings by showing respect to the bowlers. He did exactly what was required for him to stop the whispering which became loud after his failure in Zimbabwe.

"You have to grind out from the situation. We made a few mistakes in the first innings but bowlers brought us back in the match. We lost two early wickets in the second innings and we were required to do the job," said Jayawardene who put on 135 for the third wicket stand along with his deputy Sangakkara to take his side away from the early difficulty.

Jayawardene praised the Bangladesh bowling effort by saying that 'the bowlers did well particularly Mashrafe as they bowled in the right areas and created opportunities' but without any doubt the intensity like the first day was missing after the first session. And most importantly Shakib Al Hasan went wicketless as Jayawardene in particular worked him around.

It was fantastic to watch the way the right-hander moved up with his knock.

He avoided all the risks although pacer Shahadat Hossain and Mashrafe tried to tempt him with the short deliveries several times. Jayawardene initially negotiated the challenge coming from the seamers and waited for the spinners to come out from the shell.

The Lankan skipper looked solid although he did offer a couple of half chances as well as surviving close shouts from the fielders but he continued to focus on his job and didn't get bogged down at any stage.

Jayawardene as usual was strong square of the wicket on the offside, executing some eye-catching boundaries against Shahadat and Mahbubul against whom he smashed three consecutive boundaries through the off-side.

The 27-year-old batsman swept Shakib to the fine leg boundary to bring up his fifty and flicked Mahbubul to the midwicket boundary to complete his 24th Test hundred.

Soon after the completion of the hundred Jayawardene was lucky to stay at the middle as a spectacular diving catch from wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim was turned down because the bowler Mahbubul Alam had overstepped the mark.

"Every century no matter against whom is always pleasing for me," was the response of the smiling Sri Lanka skipper who admitted that he didn't hear the no-ball call and that's why he started to walk towards the dressing room.

It was however not only about the

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As good as Mashrafe gets

MOHAMMAD ISAM



It was breathtaking but the gasps grew louder with every delivery. The two-man slip cordon and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim would raise their hands in anticipation of something coming their way, but would end up clutching their heads in anguish, marvel the delivery and pass the ball around. You would lose count of the number of times this happened in Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's fourteen overs yesterday.

The country's pace bowling spearhead found little reward but in his three spells, the Sri Lankan batsmen were probed and questioned as if they were up against a harsh interrogator.

Michael Vandort was early in his sights. He was well beaten by a good length delivery that kicked up and moved away after landing on the seam. And this was just the first ball Mashrafe bowled.

The tall left-hander played and missed a number of times in a 45-minute examination that was terminated when he left a huge gap between bat and pad. Mashrafe let out a loud yelp after seeing the stumps disturbed but that

was more in satisfaction than anything else.

By this time it became apparent that for the Sri Lankans to survive, they had to see Mashrafe off. But he kept coming at them for nine consecutive overs to make full use of the early morning conditions but it could be more to do with his perfect rhythm. His release was a purist's delight and kept hitting the seam time and again.

Mashrafe did err in line twice and was duly punished but he turned around and made sure his reply was just as quick. The man perched out of touch by the commentators, Jayawardene, was initially troubled by Mashrafe and once the marathon spell was over, the experienced Lankan batted beautifully.

Midway through the second session, Mohammad Ashraful brought back his ace bowler for a breakthrough and although he did not get the wicket, the Sangakkara-Jayawardene pair shut up shop momentarily. So he was taken off and given the second new ball much later in the day and Mashrafe put the exclamation mark to his splendid day with the wicket of Thilan Samaraweera.

The right-hander came on strike after Jayawardene inside-edged the first ball of the 85th over for a single. Mashrafe kept

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Reduced run-up does wonders for Zaheer

PTI, New Delhi

India's pace spearhead Zaheer Khan has credited his return to form after months in wilderness to a reduced run-up, which he says has helped him become fitter and consistent.

"I think a major difference in my career has been my readiness to cut down on my run-up. My reduced run-up, without sacrificing on my leap at the point of delivery, has both improved my rhythm and fitness," Zaheer told PTI in an interview.

Zaheer has a new-found status of being a dreaded swing bowler and has his opponents numb with clever bouncers and one that straightens after pitching.

The left-arm paceman had successive averages of 37.40, 44.00 and 43.18 in his last three series prior to the recent one

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Duminy does a miracle

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Jean-Paul Duminy's outstanding maiden century provided more evidence for South Africa claims they are the best side in the world on a day when Australia flopped, fumbled and allowed a stunning recovery that almost certainly ended their chances of winning the series.

While Australia, the hosts were lifeless, the visitors were inspired by Duminy's fresh 166 in his second Test and Dale Steyn and Paul Harris followed in exceptional and irritating stands that stole the game from Australia.

South Africa started the morning on the third day of the second Test at the MCG Sunday 196 behind with only three wickets -- and a wobbly tail -- remaining and wanted a miracle to avoid a large deficit in reply to Australia's 394. It came through Duminy and his bowlers as they controlled an under-manned attack and posted a magnificent 459. Even a year ago this sort of charity would have been unthinkable, but the Australians had another long day in the field to consider their revised position in the world order.

Ricky Ponting was missing Brett Lee, who had a sore left foot, but given the way he has bowled during the series it was not as costly as it would have been six months earlier. Most of their pain came from Duminy, but he was joined by the No. 10 Steyn, who gathered an unlikely 76 in a performance that exposed the young attack and rallied South Africa to the point where when they were finally dismissed they owned a 65-run lead.

A day earlier there was the

threat of the follow-on, but at stumps they were in charge. Australia survived three overs and picked up four runs, while Matthew Hayden gained a bruise on his chest from Makhaya Ntini.

In a courageous partnership of 180, the third-highest ninth-wicket stand in history,

Duminy stayed cool and Steyn battled through the pain of a stinging blow on each hand to frustrate the home side and delight their own. Duminy, 24, continued his amazing start after being a key component in the record-breaking chase in Perth last Sunday.

Duminy looked as nerve-

less as a veteran such as Graeme Smith or Jacques Kallis while he carefully added to his collection and continued his rapid development. A couple of pull shots went for four off Nathan Hauritz, but it was not really a day for flourishes, and he nudged and.

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AUSSIE NIGHTMARE: South Africa middle-order batsman JP Duminy, who followed his heroics in Perth with a magnificent 166 at the MCG on Sunday, salutes the Melbourne crowd upon reaching his hundred against Australia on the third day of the second Test.



Virender Sehwag

(Star Indian batsman)

"I don't believe in technique, I believe in performance. If you are tough, whether you have technique or not, you'll survive." His philosophy behind explosive batting.



ESPN
Sportscentre India
Sports News
Live at 8:30pm

BTV
Bangladesh v Sri Lanka
First Test, Day 4
Live from 9:30am (Tuesday)

STAR Cricket
Australia v South Africa
Second Test, Day 5
Live from 5:30am (Tuesday)

ESPN
English Premier League
Man United v Middlesbrough
Live from 2:00am (Tuesday)

NZ, WI separated at last

Cricket

AFP, Hamilton

A 130-run onslaught by Jesse Ryder and Brendon McCullum led New Zealand to victory over the West Indies by 36 runs in their Twenty20 match here Sunday.

Man-of-the-match Ryder posted 62 and McCullum 59 in a record Twenty20 stand for New Zealand.

It came at a shade under 12 runs an over and ensured a formidable target as New Zealand reached 191 for nine, despite a meltdown after the opening partnership ended.

When the West Indies looked to their talisman Chris Gayle to save the day -- after he had dismissed both Ryder and McCullum -- they found his usually dependable batting talents were absent.

He was out for one in the second over and the West Indies never came close to the

required run rate, finishing at 155 for seven.

It was the first decisive result in the West Indies tour of New Zealand after the two Tests earlier in the month were drawn and the first Twenty20 went to a one-over tiebreaker, won by the West Indies.

It also snapped New Zealand's eight-game losing streak in Twenty20 fixtures.

New Zealand captain Daniel Vettori, who said he believed his side should have won the first match, was happy with this result, but had reservations.

"I was very pleased with the performance bar four or five overs of batting. It was an outstanding start from Jesse and Brendon," he said.

Gayle said the New Zealand pair's opening stand made the difference in the match. "Brendon and Jesse batted really well and took the game away from us by setting it up for the batters to come," he said.

"Our bowlers came back strong but when

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Sri Lankan supporters cheer their team during the third day's play of the first Test against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

MU confident of title

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United on the home straight in the Premier League title run-in.

Manager Sir Alex Ferguson has always maintained his side will be favourites for the championship if they reach the New Year in touch with the leading group.

And after ending the Boxing Day round of matches seven points behind leaders Liverpool with two games in hand, the confidence is growing at Old Trafford that the title can once again be theirs.

Both Liverpool and Chelsea failed to take full advantage of United's recent trip to Japan for the Club World Cup which forced them

to reschedule a league fixture. United returned from the Far East to claim a hard-fought victory at Stoke City -- the first win for one of the established 'big four' clubs in twenty days.

And with Ferguson's side set to face all the current top six at home in the second half of the season, club captain Neville believes United are best placed of all the main challengers to go on and seal the trophy in May.

"The first half of the season was always going to be difficult with the Super Cup and World Championship," said Neville.

"We have got through that now and are no worse off. If we can get those two home matches in hand now and win the games in between, we are in a great position."

Ferguson agreed with his skipper despite suffering the disappointment of seeing centre-back Rio Ferdinand

ruled out for ten days with a back problem.

The manager said: "We have a long programme of home games in the run-in against the top teams. If we get to New Year's Day within a point or so of the leaders, I think we will have a massive chance."

Jonny Evans deputised for Ferdinand at the Britannia Stadium and the Northern Ireland international will start against Middlesbrough.

At the other end of the scale, Gareth Southgate admits he's living on borrowed time at Middlesbrough if he can't arrest their nosedive towards the Championship.

Despite his close working relationship with Steve Gibson, Southgate knows the club's current barren run is testing the resolve of a chairman who has a track record for backing struggling bosses.