

Kamran reported for odd action

AFP, Johannesburg

Kamran Khan, the Rajasthan Royals' teenaged fast bowling discovery, has been reported for having a suspect bowling action.

Khan, the son of a wood-cutter from Uttar Pradesh in India, was reported by umpires Rudi Koertzen and Graham Baxter after the Royals' Indian Premier League match against the Chennai Super Kings at Centurion Thursday.

The left-armed Khan, 18, has surprised batsmen with the pace generated from a whippy, slinky action since being drafted into the Royals' squad, reportedly on a contract worth 24,000 dollars a season, after being spotted by assistant coach Darren Berry during a tournament in Mumbai.

He was the bowler chosen by captain Shane Warne to bowl a decisive 'super over' to secure a win against the Kolkata Knight Riders.

In a statement, the IPL said footage of Khan taken during Thursday's match was studied by the umpires and would be referred to the IPL's technical committee.

IPL commissioner Lalit Modi said he was awaiting a report from the committee before deciding on further action.

Sadat turns

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Sadat brilliantly exploited the meek attack of MSC comprised of skipper Tarek Aziz, Pakistani brothers Qaiser and Nayyar Abbas, Hafizur Rahman Hira, Sanyamul Islam and Sajidul Islam.

Along with experienced captain Sanwar Hossain (19 runs off 16 balls), Sadat put up 42 runs for the first wicket in only four overs and at the halfway Top Sports were 75 for 3. They slowed down in the next five overs (26 runs) but regained composure very well in the last five that saw 57 runs.

Sadat in his 78-minute stay hit four sixes and nine fours to give his team much needed win.

MSC were in discomfort all through the match especially in the second-half of their innings which was played under lights as wickets fell at regular intervals. Opener Mohammad Mithun started brightly in his cameo 9-ball 15 with two boundaries and one six. Barring Qaiser, only Tarek showed some guts with a 20-ball 14 not out. The rest of the story was a sorry sight as Mohammedan kept losing wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF

TOP SPORTS: 158 for 4 in 20 overs (Sadat 91 not out, Riyad 30, Sanwar 19; Sanjamul 2-26, Nayyar 2-32) MOHAMMEDAN: 125 all out in 18.3 overs (Qaiser 53, Mithun 15, Tarek 14, Al Mamun 10; Sunny 5-17, Lokurachchi 2-15, Weeraratna 2-23) Result: Top Sports won by 33 runs. Man-of-the-match: Nazmus Sadat.

Practice match

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played of eight boundaries and a six.

Down the order, Arafat Salahuddin scored 22 off 53 balls.

In SLC Development's first innings, seamer Mukhtar Ali picked up four wickets.

Jakati spins

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Nannes for the same score.

Both bowlers took three for 27. Delhi were rocked by fast bowler Sudeep Tyagi, 21, who dismissed stand-in captain Gautam Gambhir and AB de Villiers with successive deliveries with the total on 20. Gambhir fell to a reflex catch by Raina at short cover, while De Villiers was bowled by a ball which straightened between bat and pad.

Jakati bowled Tillekeratne Dilshan with a superb delivery before Warner and Karthik came together in a fourth wicket stand of 74.

But Warner took a wild swing at a ball from Jakati and was stumped in the 16th over to start a Delhi collapse.

SCORES IN BRIEF

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS: 163 all out in 20 overs (Hayden 30, Raina 32, Badrinath 45; Nannes 3-27, Nehra 3-27, Bhatia 2-17). DELHI DAREDEVILS: 145-8 in 20 overs (Warner 51, Karthik 52, Tyagi 2-18, Jakati 4-24). Result: Chennai Super Kings won by 18 runs. Man-of-the-match: Shadab Jakati.



STILL NOT ENOUGH: Kings XI Punjab captain Yuvraj Singh (R) is over the moon after having dismissed Mark Boucher (unseen) of the Bangalore Royal Challengers during their IPL Twenty20 match at Kingsmead in Durban on Friday. Boucher was Yuvraj's hat-trick victim but it was not enough for the Kings to avoid a defeat.

Djokovic stuns Federer

Tennis

AFP, Rome

Novak Djokovic made the most of a rain break to transform his play and beat Roger Federer 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 in a thriller on Saturday to reach the final of the ATP Rome Masters.

The world number three and reigning champion here was trailing by a set and a break when the heavens opened to give him some much needed respite.

After a little more than an hour off court, Djokovic came back rejuvenated while Federer's game slowly crumbled.

The Swiss master hadn't even faced a single break point before the rain but was broken five times after it as his radar gradually broke down.

The match had started in bright sunshine, during which time Federer had been at his dominant best and was in complete control.

Djokovic was regularly forced to save break points and at 4-4 Federer finally managed to break serve at the sixth attempt in the set - although in controversial fashion.

As Djokovic was about to hit a second serve at break point, a whistle from the crowd put him off.

That seemed to rattle the 21-year-old Serbian and in the ensuing rally he hit a wild forehand long to gift Federer the break.

Djokovic then glared long and hard into the crowd from where the whistle had come while

fans around the stadium chanted "out, out, out!"

Federer served out the set and then broke in the opening game of the second as Djokovic netted a backhand.

The number two seed led 2-1 when the rains came and held his first service game after them.

He had a chance for a double break and a 4-1 lead but after Djokovic saved that and held, the winds changed completely.

The Serbian broke back when Federer sent a backhand slice drifting over the baseline and he broke again for a 5-3 lead when Federer shanked a backhand off the frame.

Djokovic served out the set to love and looked to be in the ascendancy.

However, Federer regrouped and drew first blood in the decider when he broke for a 3-1 lead after a string of Djokovic errors including a nervous wayward forehand on break point.

But Federer then made three unforced errors to give the Serbian a 4-0 lead and a crosscourt forehand winner secured a break back.

After that Federer's game simply crumbled, particularly his backhand. He lost his next service game with a netted backhand slice and then threw away his final service game with another backhand error into the tramlines.

It was the first time Djokovic had beaten Federer on clay. The Serbian needs to retain his title here or he will lose his world number three ranking to Britain's Andy Murray.

He will play either world number one Rafael Nadal or 12th seed Fernando Gonzalez in the final.

'Perfect for T20 WC'

Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Australia's stand-in captain Michael Clarke said Saturday his country's one-day series win over Pakistan this week had boosted it chances for next month's Twenty20 World Cup tournament.

"We will have an advantage because we're playing as a team (and) a lot of these guys are going to be involved in the Twenty20 World Cup," said Clarke after Australia Friday won the fourth game a five match-series.

Australia's victory by eight wickets gave it a 3-1 lead in the series, with the fifth match to be played here Sunday.

Clarke led Australia from the front Friday, scoring an unbeaten 100 as they chased a modest 198-run target for the loss of only two wickets. Shane Watson struck 85 not out as Australia won their first one-day series since September.

Clarke said the victory boded well for Australia's prospects in the Twenty20 World Cup, to be held in England.

"If anything it's a positive that we're all together at the moment," said Clarke, Australia's captain in the absence Ricky Ponting, who was rested for this series along with Michael Hussey and Mitchell Johnson.

Clarke said he was satisfied with the way his players had adapted to conditions in the United Arab Emirates.

"To play the type of cricket we have, in hot conditions and tough wickets -- especially after coming from South Africa, where the conditions were so different -- I'm (impressed) with the way we've performed," said Clarke.

Before playing Pakistan, Australia lost two one-day series to South Africa -- home and away -- and squared a series 2-2 against New Zealand at home.

Clarke, who was out of form before this series began, said he was more pleased with the victory than his own performance.

"I'm stoked personally to make some runs but I'm more happy that we've won this series. It's been a while for us," said Clarke.

Clarke said his team would not be complacent about playing Sunday's match.

"There is no such thing as a dead match when playing for your country. To me, any time you put on your one-day cap, it's a big game and we have come here to win every game."

Clarke, who said he "really enjoyed" his first overseas tour as captain, added that he would be happy once Ponting returned to the post.

"Our captain's back home and we can't wait to have him back. He's a fantastic leader and I'm stoked that he's happy to give me these chances," he said.

Yousuf quits ICL?

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Though Yousuf appears to want to do exactly that, it is unclear what the PCB will do now. Yousuf claimed the board was aware of his decision, but officials couldn't confirm it. "If such a communication has been sent, it would've been to the chairman and much of the board has been busy with organising this series [against Australia] based in Dubai. At the moment we cannot say whether Yousuf has sent any such message," one official told Cricinfo. "Our statement is there now, so we will act accordingly to that."

Yousuf's case is particularly convoluted, for he has left the ICL before, after he first joined the league in protest at being overlooked for Pakistan's squad for the 2007 World Twenty20. He was persuaded - with the dangling of an IPL

offer -- to quit soon after by the PCB, then under Nasim Ashraf's administration. The ICL took him to court for reneging on his contract and he was unable to play in the inaugural IPL season in 2008 because of legal complications.

He played for Pakistan through much of last year before abruptly deciding, in November, to move back to the ICL. The move caught Pakistan's administration off-guard, as he had been picked for the ODI squad for a series in Abu Dhabi against West Indies. This time, he said, he left because of differences with then-captain Shoaib Malik.

"I had a problem with the captain at that time so I left. I had issues with the previous board administration as well," Yousuf said. "But now I have

no problems at all with Yousuf, or his board. The country comes first."

Though 34, if Yousuf is to come back, he could hardly do so at a more opportune time. Pakistan's batting has been engaged in a dire struggle against Australia in the UAE. In four matches so far, they have crossed 200 only once and only one batsman, Salman Butt, has scored a fifty. Most visibly, the absence of a 269-ODI veteran averaging over 40 was felt during the third ODI, when Pakistan collapsed from 95-0 to 171 all out, chasing 199. Since the 2007 World Cup and the retirement of Inzamam-ul-Haq, Yousuf has comfortably been Pakistan's leading batsman, averaging over 60 in 30 ODIs, but he played his last match in July last year.

Yuvraj hat-trick in lost game

AFP, Durban



Kings XI Punjab captain Yuvraj Singh took a hat-trick and slammed a half-century but it was not enough to secure a win for his side in their Indian Premier League match against Royal Challengers Bangalore at Kingsmead on Friday.

Instead, feisty South African all-rounder Roelof van der Merwe spurred Bangalore to an eight-run win, hitting 35 off 19 balls, taking two wickets for 22 runs and pulling off a crucial run-out.

Bangalore seemed in desperate trouble at 84 for six after Yuvraj dismissed Robin Uthappa, Jacques Kallis and Mark Boucher with successive deliveries.

But Van der Merwe chanced his arm and hit three sixes and three fours to enable Bangalore to reach 145 for nine.

Yuvraj, playing on the ground where he hit six sixes in an over for India against England in the inaugural World Twenty20 in 2007, opened the batting with Karan Goel and the pair seemed to have put their side well on the way to

victory with an opening stand of 70.

But the game changed dramatically when Anil Kumble had Yuvraj caught in deep in the tenth over. Yuvraj made 50 off 34 balls with four sixes and three fours.

Kumble, captaining the Challengers following the return of Kevin Pietersen to England, admitted afterwards: "Another five overs of Yuvvi and the game was probably over."

Van der Merwe dismissed Goel in the next over and then ran out Simon Katich with a superb diving stop and quick throw.

The Kings XI were unable to regain their momentum and their target became almost impossible when Van der Merwe had Mahela Jayawardene caught in the covers, leaving Punjab needing 30 off 17 overs.

Struggling with a wet ball, Van der Merwe's over cost 13 runs including four leg byes and a wide, but Kumble bowled Kumar Sangakkara in the next over and Praveen Kumar killed Punjab's hopes with two wickets in the final over.

"We should have won the game but Bangalore bowled well," said Yuvraj, who was named man-of-the-match despite being on the losing side.

Australia take series

Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Michael Clarke struck a sparkling hundred as Australia beat Pakistan by eight wickets in the fourth day-night international here on Friday to take an unassailable 3-1 lead in the series.

The 28-year-old Australian captain hit an unbeaten 100 and was well supported by Watson (85 not out) as the pair added 197 for the third wicket to ease Australia past a modest 198-run target with 5.4 overs to spare.

Pakistan were bowled out for 197 in 48.4 overs with Australian left-arm paceman Doug Bollinger taking 5-35 in only his second international one-day match.

Pakistan won the first match by four wickets before Australia came back strongly to win the second by six wickets and the third by 27 runs. The fifth and final match will be played here on Sunday.

This is Australia's first one-day series win since they beat Bangladesh last September, having lost to South Africa -- home and away -- and drawn 2-2 with New Zealand before sealing this series win over Pakistan.

Pakistan paceman Shoaib Akhtar removed Brad Haddin (nought) and then debutant Marcus North with only three runs on the board, before Clarke and Watson came to Australia's rescue and put on a

record stand against Pakistan.

Clarke, who hit 66 in the third match on Monday, hit Akhtar for his 14th boundary to complete his fourth one-day hundred with just one needed for victory. He faced 122 balls.

Australia's previous best third-wicket stand against Pakistan was 140 set by Kepler Wessels and Allan Border at Sydney in 1984.

Watson, 27, reached his eighth fifty with a six off spinner Shoaib Malik, and hit seven boundaries during his 140-ball knock.

Pakistan, who surprisingly rested their in-form paceman Umar Gul for this crucial match, failed to make any inroads as Akhtar also lost his steam in the second spell.

Clarke said the performance of Australia's bowling line up was crucial in the series-sealing win. "It was warm out there but our bowlers set the win for us," said Clarke, standing in for regular captain Ricky Ponting in this series. "Watson and I planned to stay at the wicket and runs came for us."

Pakistan captain Younus Khan was disappointed with

his side's inability to set a commanding total after choosing to bat first.

"For a team like Australia we needed at least 240 or 250," said Younus. "When Akhtar got two early wickets, we thought we could win but Clarke and Watson batted superbly."

Earlier, it was left-arm paceman Bollinger with his maiden five-wicket haul in 7.4 overs who helped Australia prevent Pakistan from putting up the big total needed for a series-leveling win.

Only all-rounder Shahid Afridi with a run-a-ball 40, including four boundaries, and opener Ahmed Shahzad with a useful 43 struck with authority after Pakistan won the toss and elected to bat.

Bollinger, who went without a wicket in his debut at the second match in Dubai last week, provided an early breakthrough for his team when he dismissed opener Salman Butt (two) in the first over.

From the other end, Nathan Bracken (2-31) bowled out Pakistani skipper Khan (seven).

It could have been 12-3 had Pakistani umpire Aleem Dar

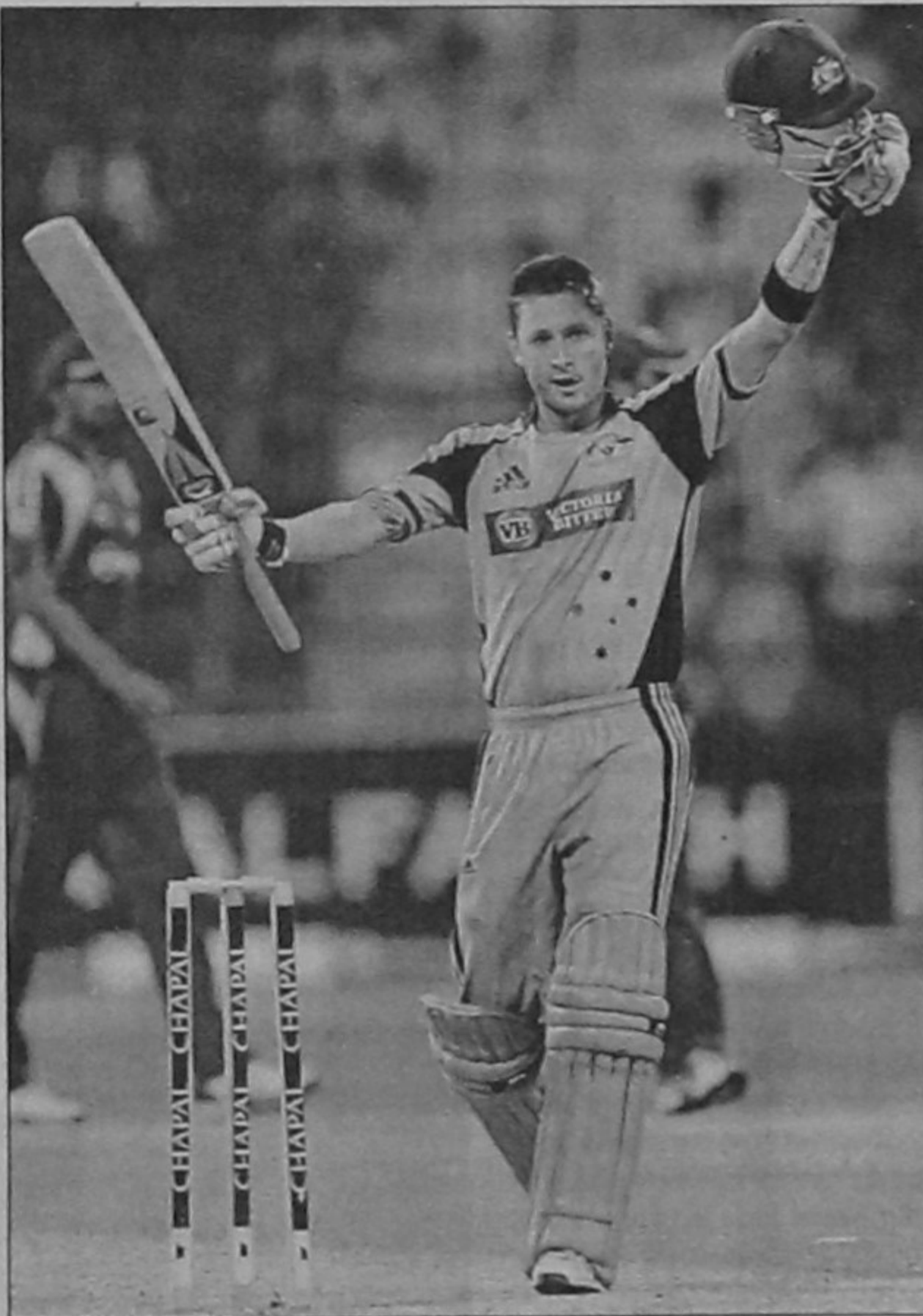


PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia captain Michael Clarke celebrates his match-winning century against Pakistan in the fourth one-day international at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Friday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers. Includes sections for Across, Down, and Cryptic clues.

Cryptic crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers.

CRYPTOQUIP

ER MTLF ITIVYZA ZRQEFRW
MWTAEFM HEWN LTAYZM
QTYVU QNZAZQWFA BYZHM
CF QZYYFU ZFMTI'M BTECYFM?
Yesterday's Cryptquip: SUPPOSING AN OGRE PREFERRED A CERTAIN SEMISOFT CHEESE, COULD ONE CALL HIM A MUENSTER MONSTER? Today's Cryptquip Clue: Z equals A