

SL v WEST INDIES Academic affair

AFP, Nottingham

Sri Lanka and the West Indies will enjoy a contest without pressure when they clash in their last Group C league match of the World Twenty20 here on Wednesday.

What should have been a virtual knock-out game in the group will hold nothing more than academic interest after both teams knocked mighty Australia out of the tournament.

"This was the only group that had three Test-playing nations in it, so to come out of it pretty well is a huge bonus," said Sri Lankan captain Kumar Sangakkara.

"Both the West Indies and us have made the Super Eights, so the pressure will no doubt be a bit less. But international cricket is serious business, there is no question of taking it easy."

Sri Lanka hammered Ricky Ponting's men by six wickets on Monday, two days after the West Indies rode on captain Chris Gayle's explosive 88 off 50 overs to down the Aussies by seven wickets.

Sangakkara said Ajantha Mendis's success against Australia, where he took 3-20 in four overs, bode well for his team and he expected the mystery spinner to play a major role in the tournament.

"In a Twenty20 game, where you have to attack almost every ball you play, to have unpredictability, that mystery around him is good," the captain said.

"Batsmen will get on top of him on some days, but more often than not, he is a wicket-taking bowler, an attacking bowler."

Champs

FROM PAGE 17 of taking any team easy.

"I admit the intensity will not be as much as it was in the game against Bangladesh, but we are very serious about winning going into the Super Eights."

Ireland, buoyed by Monday's six-wicket win over Bangladesh, are excited about playing India on the world's biggest stage.

"If you can't get up and enjoy a game against the world Twenty20 champions, there is no point coming here," said batsman-wicketkeeper Niall O'Brien, who top-scored with 40 off 25 balls against Bangladesh.

"If you can't enjoy 20 overs in the field and hitting sixes while batting, what are you going to enjoy? We will give it everything we have got on Wednesday."

Ireland are playing in their first World Twenty20, although they have figured before in the 50-overs-a-side World Cup and beat Pakistan in the 2007 event in the Caribbean.

Irish heroes

FROM PAGE 17 It was brought to Ireland by the English and initially thrived when it also spread through landed estates.

The progress of the game was then hammered by two developments -- "land wars" of the late 1800s against mainly Protestant British landlords and the 1884 founding of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) to nurture the native games of hurling and Gaelic football.

In the 1890s the GAA brought in a ban on their players taking part in "foreign games" like cricket, hockey, rugby and soccer. The ban was not rescinded until 1971.



Did U Know?

Russian Dinara Safina and her brother Marat Safin are the first brother-sister tandem in tennis history to both achieve No. 1 ranking.



Australia skipper Ricky Ponting (foreground) walks back after being dismissed for 35 runs as Sri Lanka players celebrate during their ICC World Twenty20 match at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on Monday.

Sangakkara wants more

AFP, Nottingham



Kumar Sangakkara celebrated his first stint as Sri Lanka's captain by dumping mighty Australia from the World Twenty20, then warned rivals he was hungry for more scalps.

"I can't ask for more, but this is just the start. We want to continue in the same vein," he said after the six-wicket win over Australia at Trent Bridge on Monday night.

The left-hander himself led from the front with an unbeaten 55, building on the robust 53 off 32 balls by Tillakaratne Dilshan, as Sri Lanka surpassed Australia's 159-9 with six balls to spare.

Ricky Ponting's men, beaten by the West Indies in their first match, bowed out of the tournament with their fifth successive Twenty20 defeat and ample time in hand to prepare for next month's Ashes series.

Sri Lanka and the West Indies, who take the two Super Eights places from the group, play each other in the inconsequential last league match on Wednesday.

"We don't want to take anything easy," said Sangakkara. "We want to beat the West Indies also, so that we are on a roll going into the Super Eights."

"I don't want us to get too carried away by just one win. The Twenty20 game can be very demanding. You have to be up to it every single day."

"It feels great to beat a side like Australia. It was a case of sticking to the basics, sticking to our game plan."

"But the key to beating Australia is that

everyone in the squad must believe that we can win. Now there are a few areas we need to brush up on, so that we will be even better in the days ahead," he said.

Australia, sent in to bat on an even-paced wicket, managed only 159-9 in good batting conditions as mystery spinner Ajantha Mendis and fast bowler Lasith Malinga claimed three wickets each.

Jehan Mubarak hit 21 not out to keep his captain company till the end, which came when Mitchell Johnson sent down a wide off the first delivery of the final over.

Sangakkara said the stint in the Indian Premier League for many Sri Lankan players was a boon.

"It was a wonderful experience," he said. "There are 13 of us playing in the IPL and hopefully there will be many more next year."

"Even if you don't get a chance to play many games in the IPL, one learns from watching the greats, learn to be innovative, which is so essential in Twenty20 cricket."

It was Sri Lanka's first international match since the terror attack on their team bus in the Pakistani city of Lahore on March 3 which left seven players injured and killed eight Pakistani securitymen.

Sangakkara's team was greeted to Trent Bridge by some 100 people waving banners in protest against what they claimed was killing of innocent Tamils by the Sri Lankan armed forces in the war against the Tamil Tigers.

Asked to react on the protests, the captain said: "We are here to play cricket. Anything else does not bother us."

Premature exit brings

FROM PAGE 17 things there way a lot and they don't listen that well and it is time some pressure is put on them to listen, from the captain down," he responded when asked whether not playing to plan had become habitual.

Captain Ashraful, who stays back in England along with Shakib, also admitted that their short selection was poor which was the reason behind the defeat.

"I believe losing five wickets inside the first 10 overs. Also, like the coach said, we did not play according to the plan and our shot selection was very poor. Ireland today were better than us in all three departments. Our batting effort was poor and we never had enough runs to put them under pressure. This is the worst we have played since arriving in England," said Ashraful.

Siddons said that his charges were not up to the

mark under pressure but his skipper had the different opinions.

"I think the cooler heads prevail. It is as simple as that. More senior cricketers, not in terms of international exposure but those who have been around a while, tend to stay cool under pressure. Our guys again under pressure were not up to it. They just needed to make the correct decisions under I won't say a great deal of pressure because Ireland, who are a good side, are not as good as most sides we play against," he explained.

"Not really. We knew that if we did our process right then we would beat Ireland. Unfortunately all of us top order batsmen were guilty of some very bad cricket," said Ashraful.

Replying to a question how Bangladesh should take this tournament, Siddons said: "It's Twenty20 and Ireland played well and beat us but we

are a better team than they are. Any team can win here like Holland beating England. But we have had some good form lately and I'm sure we will continue to improve. I am looking forward to that tour against the West Indies."

Bangladesh coach however immediately shifted his focus on his team's next assignment to West Indies.

"All along at the back of my mind has been the West Indies tour and how we can compete and put them under pressure. We got to the West Indies next and that's where we need to show that we are an improved side. Twenty20 cricket is a lot of fun and it's all over in two-three overs. You play two or three bad shots you lose the game and on the other side of the coin two or three good shots can win you a game. Now we are back to 50 over cricket and Test cricket and we have to play a lot better than we did today," he said.

KP sees new England

FROM PAGE 17 showed we're a force to be reckoned with."

Pietersen admitted: "In the England teams I've played in for a quite a while there have been players who have played with fear, players who think about consequences and what's been written in the media and think about what guys say in the press box."

"I think the guys went out against Pakistan to put in a performance where they were

not worried about what happens. We went out to play positive cricket like we have been playing and it was outstanding."

But the worry for England is that Pietersen's injury is not yet fully healed and may only cease to be an issue after several months' rest.

Pietersen's fitness isn't just central to their hopes of winning the World Twenty20 but

also their prospects in the Ashes Test series against Australia that starts in July.

Then comes a one-day series with Australia followed by the Champions Trophy and a tour of South Africa.

And, whatever the opinion of England's medical staff, Pietersen is determined not to sit out any more games. "What cures it is two or three months out of the game and that ain't happening - I'm not missing that."

"I didn't want to miss Friday and I certainly wasn't going to miss the game against Pakistan."

"I was going to play in that even if I was only 50 percent fit because I want to play for England and I didn't want us to get knocked out of the tournament."

He added: "I've played with injuries, I've played with broken ribs and the lot and it's a case of managing what you've got and trying to make sure it doesn't flare up."

CA responsible too?

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

For many Australians, cricket's enfant terrible Andrew Symonds had to go.

The prodigiously-talented all-rounder was given countless chances, yet blew them all, leaving officials and teammates with no option but to cut him adrift.

Symonds has been likened to a fish out of water. He simply could not countenance fitting into a politically-correct team environment and the rules he had to obey.

He turned to the booze to help escape his disillusionment with cricket and the rest, as they say, is history.

But what about Cricket Australia's (CA) role in the whole, sorry mess?

There is widespread opinion in Australia that feckless officials let Symonds get away with far too much for far too long.

The origins go back four years ago when Symonds turned up drunk on the morning of Australia's one-day international with Bangladesh in Cardiff.

He was immediately stood down and Cricket Australia chief executive James Sutherland told him that he would have his contract torn up if there was a repeat of his behaviour.

As one well-connected cricket writer succinctly put it: "Yet he did - at least four times - and until now his contract remained intact."

Symonds continued to embarrass his skipper Ricky Ponting, teammates and CA officials with his recidivist actions over the ensuing years.

And each time CA and the selectors found a way to bring him back into the fold, albeit not for this year's Ashes Test series in England.

CA ordered him to undergo counselling and even sessions on the psychologist's couch to 'rehabilitate' the dysfunctional cricketer.

Yet after all the counselling and belief that Symonds was better for it, he again self-destructed in the days before the World Twenty20 tournament in England this month and was ordered home.

English press relish Aussie T20 exit

AFP, London

The English press reacted with glee Tuesday to news that Ricky Ponting's Australia team was knocked out of the World Twenty20, ahead of next month's Ashes series between the two countries.

"Even Ireland make the Super 8s but Ricky's boys crash out as wallabies," said the Sun tabloid, reflecting a surprising day for the tournament that saw mighty Australia dumped but Ireland stay in after beating Bangladesh.

"What do you call an Aussie at the Twenty20? A spectator," joked the Daily Mirror, after what was Australia's fifth successive Twenty20 defeat.

One commentator wrote: "Since they touched down in England 12 days ago, Australia's tour has gone exactly according to plan... England's plan."

Australia, the reigning Test and World Cup champions, were sent packing from the World Twenty20 after suffering a six-wicket defeat by Sri Lanka in a crucial group C game at Trent Bridge on Monday.

They now turn their attention to retaining the Ashes urn in the five-Test series against England starting next month.

"The Aussies now have two weeks to fill before the Ashes tour begins. So throw another shrimp on the barbie, Ricky!" the Sun mocked.

Afridi propels

FROM PAGE 17 in the space of 10 balls.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 175 for 5 in 20 overs (Akmal 41, Butt 18, Malik 30, Younus 36, Misbahul 31 not out, Afridi 13; Seelaar 2-36)

NETHERLANDS: 93 all out in 17.3 overs (Reekers 13, Kervezee 21, Zuiderent 13, Ten Doeschate 14, Smits 11 not out; Ajmal 3-20, Afridi 4-11)

Result: Pakistan won by 82 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Kamran Akmal.

Flying start for Roddick

Tennis

AFP, London

Andy Roddick began his challenge for a record fifth Queen's title with a comfortable 6-1, 6-4 second round victory over Kristof Vliegen at the pre-Wimbledon warm-up event on Tuesday.

Roddick has always been at home on the grass courts of west London and the second seed was quickly back in the old routine.

The American, ranked sixth in the world, suffered only his third defeat in eight visits to Queen's when he was beaten at the semi-final stage by Rafael Nadal last year.

But he has been playing with renewed verve since acting on new coach Larry

Stefanki's advice to lose weight earlier this year.

Marriage to model Brooklyn Decker seems to have put a spring in Roddick's step as well and Vliegen, a Belgian ranked 89th, was no match for the former Wimbledon finalist.

Roddick's powerful serve and bruising ground-strokes make him a formidable opponent on grass and he was soon on top, breaking Vliegen in his opening service game and taking the first set in the blink of an eye.

The 2003 US Open champion was pushed a little harder in the second set as Vliegen gradually found some composure. But Roddick was never flustered and broke in the ninth game before serving out the match in a barrage of aces.

Roddick will play

Australia's Lleyton Hewitt or Portugal's Frederico Gil in the third round.

Spain's Juan Carlos Ferrero, the 2003 French Open champion, reached the second round faster than expected after Sebastian Grosjean was forced to retire early in the second set.

Grosjean, a two-time Queen's runner-up, was playing in only his second tournament since October after recovering from a shoulder injury and the Frenchman was unable to last the pace.

Ferrero, who now plays 11th seed Paul-Henri Mathieu, broke in the first game of the match and punched home his advantage to take the first set 6-2.

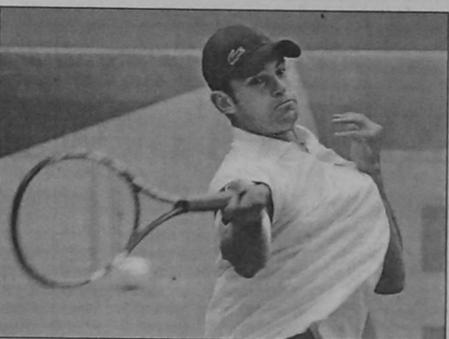
Grosjean was clearly struggling and, after conceding another break early in the second set to 2-1 down, he briefly had to treatment before accepting he couldn't carry on.

Spain's Alberto Martin marked his Queen's debut with a 7-6 (9/7), 6-4 first round victory over Ernests Gulbis, the Latvian 13th seed.

Martin, 30, had played 14 consecutive tournaments on his favoured clay courts coming into this event, but he was still able to adapt better than Gulbis to the quicker surface.

Gulbis served for the first set at 5-4 but Martin broke back and won the tie-break before taking the match with the only break of the second set.

Martin will play Belgium's Steve Darcis, who came from a set down to beat Paul Capdeville 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.



US star Andy Roddick hits a forehand against Kristof Vliegen of Belgium during their first round match at Queen's Club in London on Tuesday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP

WS TQZJ SYW VDS ISYBJ LZQW WDG KGCW CSILBQLG CDSG TSE KXKQGC VG CWXEWGJ X KSSWGG ISZWGCW.

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MOVIE IN WHICH A GROUP DEVELOPS ALMOST A DOZEN NEW MOISTURIZING CREAMS: "LOTIONS ELEVEN." Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals U

Announcement for ICC T20 WC

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