

Panel formed to settle doping row

CRICINFO, undated

The ICC has formed a committee to resolve the concerns of the Indian board regarding the controversial 'whereabouts' clause of the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) code.

The International Registered Testing Pool (IRTP) working group will be chaired by Tim Kerr, chairman of ICC Anti-Doping panel, and also includes ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat, BCCI secretary N Srinivasan, ICC principal advisor IS Bindra and former India captain Anil Kumble, who sits on WADA's Athlete Committee.

Eleven Indian players are in the ICC's drug testing pool, and they have raised concerns about the clause, which requires them to inform the ICC at the beginning of every quarter (three-month period) of the year, a location and time that they will be available for an hour each day in that quarter for testing. The BCCI and the players were worried about security risks involved in providing whereabouts information in advance and have also said that the clause is a violation of privacy statutes.

No dates have yet been set for a meeting of the IRTP panel, which was formed after the BCCI announced on Sunday that it would not require its players to file the 'whereabouts' information. WADA has been invited to send a representative to advise the panel.

Fire alarm

FROM PAGE 17 Investigation had been held and the matter "dealt with". She said "an incident like this could happen at any time".

She added: "I can confirm that at approximately 5:00am the hotel was evacuated due to the fire alarm being activated."

"Our prime and continued focus is to ensure the health and safety and well-being of all our guests and staff alike."

"As a matter of pure precaution we evacuated the hotel. The hotel follows stringent health and safety guidelines and all our staff have been trained accordingly to handle such an incident."

Zaheer to miss

FROM PAGE 17 November and remains a doubtful starter for the Test and one-day series against Sri Lanka at home in November-December.

Zaheer took part in the World Twenty20 in England in June despite the injury, but missed the subsequent one-day series in the West Indies in early July.

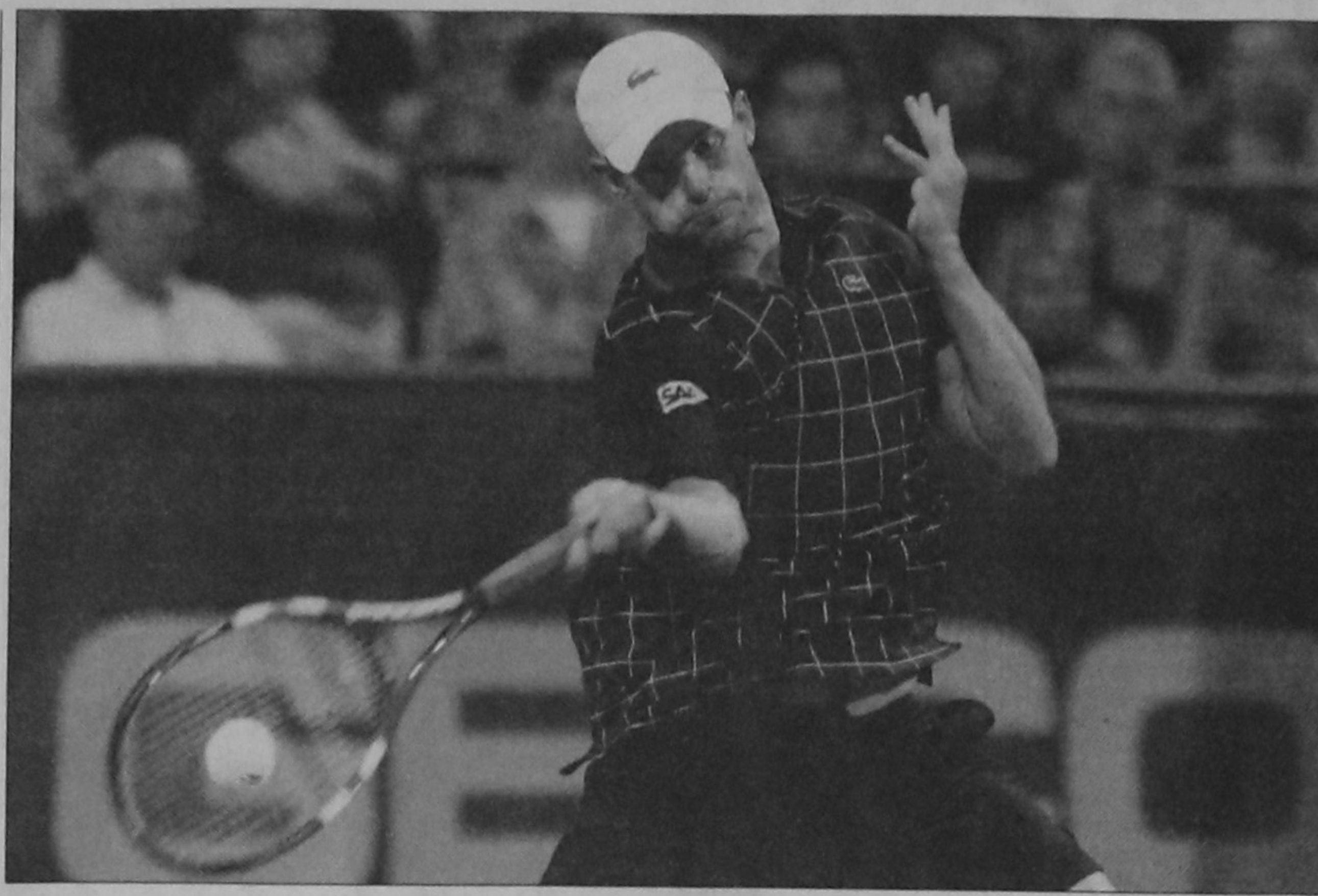
Teammate Virender Sehwag and the English duo of Kevin Pietersen and Andrew Flintoff are the other notable players who suffered or aggravated existing injuries during the IPL.

England routed

FROM PAGE 17 with a Sam fire alarm at the team hotel, and crescendoed an hour before the toss, when Prior -- who has been so pivotal to their fortunes as a counterattacking no. 6 -- went down with a back spasm while playing football. While Paul Collingwood donned the gloves as a precaution, Australia agreed to delay the toss by ten minutes to give England time to work out their final XI. The confirmation of Flintoff's lack of fitness ended up being the least of the team's worries.

In the event, the only England batsman to show any spine was none other than Prior, who was out in the middle at least two sessions sooner than he might have anticipated, but gritted his way to 37 not out from 43 balls before running out of partners. One other batsman who managed double figures -- Alastair Cook, who was the mainstay of a flimsy top order with 30 from 65 balls -- in an abject display that has effectively left them needing to bounce back with victory at The Oval next week to regain the urn that had been so firmly in their grasp going into the final day at Edgbaston last week.

The chaos behind England's scenes evidently took their toll on the captain, Andrew Strauss, who was rejigging his team sheet right



US tennis star Andy Roddick plays a powerful return during his game against compatriot Sam Querrey (not in picture) at the Legg Mason Classic in Washington, DC on Thursday. Roddick got his 500th career win as he went on to beat Querrey 7-6, 6-4.

Roddick on 500

Tennis

INTERNET, undated

Three-times champion Andy Roddick won the 500th match of his professional career with a hard-fought 7-6(4) 6-4 third round victory over fellow American Sam Querrey at the Washington Classic.

Roddick is the 36th player overall and fourth active to achieve the milestone, along with Roger Federer (657), Carlos Moya (573) and Lleyton Hewitt (511), with the win putting him in the quarterfinals of an event he last won in 2007.

"It's a pretty small number of players who have gotten there, an elite group," Roddick said. "I've done it with enough time (in my career) to add to it."

"It's validation of consistency in my career." Hewitt, meanwhile, failed to add to his tally, dropping a 4-6 6-3 7-6(2) decision to second seed and defending champion Juan Martin del Potro of Argentina.

Tenth seed Tommy Haas defeated Juan

Carlos Ferrero 7-5 2-6 6-1, while Robin Soderling, the fifth-seed, managed to edge Marc Gicquel 7-5-76-3.

Fourth seeded Fernando Gonzalez had an easier time, stopping American Wayne Odesnik 6-2 6-4, while number 11 Ivo Karlovic defeated qualifier Somdev Devvarman 7-5 6-1 to set up a clash against Roddick.

Roddick, playing in his first tournament since his epic five-set final loss to Federer at Wimbledon, struggled with his serve at times. He did manage three aces but also committed six double faults and dropped his serve twice.

"I served badly tonight but it's gratifying because it was a match I wouldn't have won a few years ago," Roddick said. "I didn't know what the outcome would be."

"He is game-ready and I was coming off the bench." By contrast, Querrey felt there was nothing wrong with Roddick's serve.

"He was serving just so well," Querrey said. "The most impressive thing is his serve percentage... it is one thing to hit it 135 miles an hour, but to get 65 to 70 per cent is incredible."

Ponting feels for Taufel

Cricket

AFP, Leeds

Australia captain Ricky Ponting said he understood the "disappointment" leading umpire Simon Taufel must be feeling at being denied a chance to stand in the ongoing Ashes series.

Until 2002, Test matches were controlled by at least one official from the host country.

But, amidst concerns about perceptions of impartiality, the system was changed to ensure Tests were umpired by 'neutral' officials with no connection to either nation.

Consequently, 38-year-old Australian Taufel, widely regarded as the world's best umpire, has missed out on standing in showcase series such as the Ashes.

Meanwhile, Australia's record in World Cup finals -- they've won the last three -- has denied him the chance of officiating in limited overs international cricket's premier fixture.

Despite the advent of an elite umpiring panel, all meant to be of a roughly similar standard, Taufel has been voted the International Cricket Council's Umpire of the Year for the past five years.

Umpiring controversies have been a feature of the ongoing Ashes series, where England

lead Australia 1-0 with two to play, and the decision-making of veteran South African official Rudi Koertzen has come in for criticism.

Such is Taufel's reputation, it is unlikely either England or Australia would object to him standing in an Ashes series.

Ponting, speaking at Headingley, where the fourth Test starts on Friday, said: "I know he's been disappointed over the years that he hasn't been able to umpire us because we've had a lot of success as a team and we've had World Cup finals and he hasn't been able to umpire those either."

He added: "The guy that's been recognised as the best umpire in the world isn't actually able to umpire the big events which for him as an umpire, I'm sure would be disappointing."

"But I'd like to think though that any guy on that elite panel will be good enough to do a great job in a Test match or a Test series." "You want all the guys on the elite panel to be at the same standard so there aren't too many standouts if you like."

Australia fast bowling great Dennis Lillee reckoned now retired English official Dickie Bird to be the best umpire he'd come across in his career.

Ponting, asked if he would have any problems with an English official standing in an Ashes match, replied: "I wouldn't have any."

Crouch's WC gamble at Spurs

AFP, London

Peter Crouch insisted on Friday that his move to Tottenham will not torpedo his hopes of playing in the World Cup finals.

The 28-year-old beanpole striker will compete with Jermain Defoe, Robbie Keane and Roman Pavlyuchenko for a starting place in Harry Redknapp's Spurs line-up.

At previous club Portsmouth, he was a guaranteed starter.

"I have confidence in my own ability and that, when given the opportunities, I will take them," said Crouch who has scored 16 goals in 34 England appearances.

"I've been in and out of the England side but when I've played I've always felt I've done well and scored goals. I'm confident that I'll be playing every week and doing all I can to make sure I'm on that plane to South Africa (for the World Cup)."

"If you want to play for England and a big club like Tottenham, you've got to make sure you're scoring goals and playing well. I've been under that pressure however long my career has been going."

"I impose most pressure on myself. I have high expectations and I've got to make sure I do the business."

Alfaz back

FROM PAGE 17 services of eight players.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Russel KC offered four players Emily, Wali, Zahid and Ariful with more money than they were getting from Mohammedan, but it was too late for the new powerhouse.

"Yes, we wanted to pay those four players 25 percent more than Mohammedan's payment, but it was too late, mainly due to lack of fund that was generated a few weeks ago," said Sheikh Russel president Nurul Islam Chowdhury, who, however, did not consider Alfaz.

"No doubt, he performed better last season though he is at his fag end of his career and this time we are aiming to recruit an energetic and speedy striker," said Chowdhury.

Sachin targets

FROM PAGE 17 only modern player in Bradman's all-time XI. Does Tendulkar think the same way about anyone? "I would say Virender Sehwag comes closest to mystyle."

Tendulkar said he was not thinking about retirement yet but he would know when to quit cricket. "I will know when it is the right time, I won't have to be dragged away. I am the person who will make the decision and I will know whether I still belong."

He admitted life after cricket wouldn't be easy. "It's a scary thought. It has been there for my whole adult life, it will be difficult, I have been around for a long time, I can imagine when I finish I will long to face just 10 more balls but you have to move."

Vettori voices optimism

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

New Zealand open their Sri Lanka tour Friday with skipper Daniel Vettori confident his side can make an impact despite a relatively inexperienced line-up.

The Kiwis kick off their six-week tour against a Sri Lanka development squad and have just one more warm-up fixture before the opening Test in Galle on August 18.

The visitors, who last played Test cricket in April, when they hosted India, were forced to practise indoors before their arrival due to the New Zealand winter.

"We are looking forward to the warm-up games, especially for some of our younger players, to get used to the heat and the Sri Lankan bowlers," Vettori told AFP during a function on Thursday night.

"Everybody has been working hard indoors, but there is only so much you can do," said the veteran skipper, whose last international outing was at the World Twenty20 in England in June.

Vettori, with 92 Tests behind him, said the Black Caps have talent, but lack the experience to be consistent in the longer version of the game.

"Most of the guys in the side have not played a lot of Test cricket," he said.

"That is one of the reasons why we have not performed so well in the Tests. This team has the talent to succeed. We have to just get some performances under our belt."

The slow left-arm orthodox bowler believes

his team is strong on bowling and hopes the batsmen will adjust to the pressures in the two-Test series, featuring games in Galle and Colombo.

"We have experience in our bowling -- me, Chris Martin and Jacob Oram -- that helps us a lot. We do have a very experienced top order but you have to say our strength is in our bowling," said Vettori.

Vettori is confident the Black Caps will perform well on the tour, which includes two Twenty20 internationals and a tri-nation one-day series also featuring India.

"You always go into the series wanting to win but if we could pull off a couple of draws or win the series 1-0, that's pretty good."

He said the recent Sri Lanka-Pakistan series, which the home side won 2-0, had shown the importance of seam bowlers but New Zealand are also bracing themselves for the threat from Muttiah Muralidaran and Ajantha Mendis.

After a torn tendon kept him away from the Tests with Pakistan, Muralidaran, the world's leading Test and one-day wicket-taker, remains the Kiwis' biggest threat.

"It will be a learning curve for a number of our players," said Vettori. "For many this will be the first time they will be seeing Murali and Mendis."

The second Test in Colombo starts on August 26.

SQUAD

Daniel Vettori (captain), Tim McIntosh, Martin Guptill, Craig Cumming, Jesse Ryder, Ross Taylor, Daniel Flynn, Brendon McCullum, Jacob Oram, Grant Elliott, Reece Young, Daryl Tuffey, Jeetan Patel, Iain O'Brien, Chris Martin.

Zheng ousts Safina

Tennis

INTERNET, undated

China's Zheng Jie capitalised on a final set meltdown by world number one Dinaara Safina to reach the quarterfinals of the LA Championships with a 7-5 4-6 6-4 victory over the Russian.

The 14th-seeded Zheng stood strong against a barrage of huge blows from her opponent over the course of the two-hour-and-10-minute contest to emerge with a first win in five attempts against the defending champion.

Safina had appeared on course for victory when she forged a 4-2 lead in the third set but imploded completely, handing back the break with a double fault before losing the final eight points of the match to crash out of the tournament.

"It's tough to play her but I didn't do the right things," Safina said. "I should have played better. She took her chances and beat me."

Zheng advanced to a last-eight encounter against in-form Australian Samantha Stosur, who continued her fine season with a 6-3 6-2 victory over sixth seed Ana Ivanovic.

The 13th seed was delighted to overcome the Serbian former world number one, gaining some revenge for losing to Ivanovic in their last meeting at Wimbledon in June. It was also Stosur's sixth win over a top-15 opponent this year.

Umar turns up the heat

FROM PAGE 17 appeared comfortable from the get-go. He showed he wasn't going to get bogged down, swinging his seventh delivery -- from Ajantha Mendis, no less -- over long on for a six and flicked almost effortlessly. Finding the narrowest of gaps in the field and always sprinting hard between the wickets, he began rebuilding.

His was a sensible approach, poaching the odd boundary and turning ones into twos while also dominating the perceived weaker bowlers. Thilina Kandamby's part-time legspin was dumped with ferocity for six by Umar, twinkle-toed and sure of placement. There was also the delicate; the first four in 22 overs came when a confident Umar dabbled Angelo Mathews past a leaping Kumar Sangakkara.

Credit is due to the man at the other end. Younis' innings contained crisp drives and wristy flicks and stolen runs but most importantly it was an effort that allowed Umar to flourish. Around his captain, Umar could play his own game and Pakistan didn't feel the pinch.

Pakistan had been hurt in the series by Younis' indifferent form. Yesterday they realised just what a difference runs from him can mean. Importantly, he quickly assessed conditions and played with a welcome smoothness. Younis' innings was controlled, he ran hard between the wickets, and Pakistan's run-rate lifted to nearly five-and-a-half an over. With Umar rattling along Younis too changed his game. Soon defence turned to single hunting, gliding and efficiently flicking in the gaps.

Umar's half-century came up from 46 balls, after which he upped his strike-rate. Always keen to get back and across and then mow the ball over the on-side, he took consecutive fours off Mendis and then clubbed Lasith

Malinga for 13 in the 46th over. Another effortless six off Malinga followed in the 48th over, the back leg once more lifted to gain power. This was unadulterated hitting, each shot played with utmost confidence.

Younis departed for 89 in the 49th over trying to get six but Umar reached three figures with two balls to spare. He clipped the ball to deep square leg, ran two, then got two more as Sangakkara's throw was not backed up. Instantly his face -- up till then all furrowed brow and gritted teeth -- erupted in cherubic celebration as the Pakistan team stood to applaud a brilliant effort.

This partnership was in contrast to the way Imran Nazir and Kamran Akmal were made to work hard against an accurate new-ball pair on a track on which the ball regularly stopped before reaching the batsmen. Nazir, clearly looking rusty after nearly two seasons out of the side, was reprieved by the umpires on 7 and 19 before he missed a high full toss. There were just two well-timed boundaries in the first six overs, with the majority of runs coming through inside-edges and miscues.

Once Kamran realised the track wasn't conducive to reaching out for the ball, he held back and punched the ball off the back foot. A few spanked off-side boundaries later he appeared in the groove and his feet were moving well. But while trying to sweep Malinga Bandara without covering the stumps, Kamran was bowled around the legs for 57. And just when the situation demanded a cautious approach, Younis reached out and edged Mendis to Mahela Jayawardene at first slip. Pakistan were 115 for 3, which became 130 for 4 when Bandara had Misbah lbw trying to nudge to leg.

SCOREBOARD
Scoreboard of the Pakistan innings in the fourth one-day

international against Sri Lanka at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo on Friday:

PAKISTAN				
K Akmal b Bandara	57			
Nazir b Thushara	23			
Younis c Kapugedera b Thushara	89			
Yousuf c Jayawardene b Mendis	6			
Misbahul lbw b Bandara	9			
U Akmal not out	102			
Afridi not out	2			
Extras: (b-4, w-29)	33			
Total: (For 5 wks in 50 overs)	321			
Did not bat: Naved, Aamer, Iftikhar, Ajmal.				
Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-106, 3-115, 4-130, 5-306.				

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Malinga	10	0	79	0
Thushara	10	0	74	2
Mathews	8	0	48	0
Bandara	10	0	44	2
Mendis	10	0	56	1
Kandamby	2	0	16	0
Toss: Pakistan				
Umpires: Steve Davis (AUS) and Gaminil Silva (SRI)				
Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)				

Weary Tigers

FROM PAGE 17 chairman Jalal Yunus when asked about the schedule.

It was learnt that the players had also faced problem with their kits as the luggage was displaced in the Johannesburg airport and that's why it did not reach on time in Zimbabwe. They received their luggage just before the start of the practice match.

When asked, Jalal Yunus admitted the incident. "Yes, we have informed that the kits did not arrive on time," he said.

SCORES IN BRIEF
BANGLADESH: 180 all out in 49.3 overs (Rokibul Hassan 55, Mushfiqur Rahim 32, Nayeem Islam 17; Admire Manyumba 3 wks, Chamu Chibhabha 2 wks)
ZIMBABWE A: 181 for 3 in 38.1 overs (Forster Mutizwa 78 not out, Tatenda Taibu 66 not out; Nazmul 2 wks, Raseel 1 wkt)
RESULT: Zimbabwe A won by seven wickets.