

Fred rejects ECB offer

Cricket

AFP, Nottingham

Andrew Flintoff has rejected the offer of an England incremental contract, the all-rounder announced on Tuesday, a move that effectively saw him become a free-lance player.

The 31-year-old, who retired from Test cricket after England's Ashes triumph last month and who is currently sidelined with a knee injury, said his decision would help him become the best one-day international player in the world.

While stressing he remained committed to both Lancashire and England, Flintoff said in a statement on his own website: "I said when I retired from Test cricket my ambition was to become the best one-day and Twenty20 player in the world and playing in all these different countries can only help."

Flintoff was only available for an England incremental contract, worth some 30,000 pounds, rather than the more lucrative central contract because of his retirement from Tests.

An England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) spokesman told reporters here at Trent Bridge, where England eventually lost the fifth one-

day international against Australia to go 5-0 down in a seven-match series, said that they would not react immediately.

"We have only just received the statement so we need some time to digest it properly and consider where the ECB stands before making a considered response."

Flintoff, currently recovering from knee surgery, retired from Test cricket after the end of England's Ashes triumph last month because he said his injury-hit body could no longer stand the strain of the five-day game.

After Tuesday's four-wicket loss, England captain Andrew Strauss told reporters: "I don't know why he's turned it down. We need to find out what the reasons are and then make an informed decision."

"If Freddie is committed to playing for England, he's still a great asset for us in the shorter forms of the game."

Australia captain Ricky Ponting, who recently announced his retirement from international Twenty20s, was sympathetic, saying: "You can't begrudge players like Flintoff doing that, his body has forced him into (Test) retirement."

"It's inevitable it is going to happen -- the number of tournaments around the world, you can't play everything."

"If he's not playing Test cricket for England, his contract wouldn't have been worth that much. It's a challenge for administrators...will England continue to pick him?"

Flintoff has reportedly been the target of interest from domestic sides in Australia and South Africa.

Earlier this year, Flintoff played for Chennai Super Kings in the wealthy Indian Premier League (IPL), sustaining a knee injury in the process, and already has the required no-objection certificate (NOC) from the ECB for the 2010 edition, which allows him to play there for a minimum of three weeks.

However, the refusal of

Flintoff, whose career has been blighted by four ankle and two knee operations, to sign an incremental contract means he has more leverage in deciding where and when he plays rather than being at the beck and call of England coach Andy Flower.

Speaking from Dubai, where he is recuperating from an operation on his right knee, Flintoff said: "I was flattered to receive the offer of an incremental contract from the ECB, which I wasn't really expecting, but at this stage of my career I don't think I need to be told when to play and when to rest."

"I am 31, I have played international cricket for 11 years and know my body's capabilities."

He added: "I am grateful to the ECB for all the financial support they have given me to help in my rehabilitation."

"Their decision to pay for (physiotherapist) Dave Roberts's continued expertise to aid my recovery has been invaluable."

Flintoff, provided his rehabilitation goes smoothly, hopes to return to international cricket on England's tour of Bangladesh in February, play for Chennai in the IPL and then compete in the ICC World Twenty20 tournament in the West Indies which starts in April.



ANDREW FLINTOFF

Briatore leaves Renault

INTERNET, undated

Managing director Flavio Briatore and executive director of engineering Pat Symonds have left Renault over race-fixing allegations, which the team will not contest.

Renault have been the subject of an investigation by the governing FIA regarding allegations that former driver Nelson Piquet Jr deliberately crashed in the Singapore Grand Prix last season.

The incident in the night race enabled team-mate Fernando Alonso to win as he was favourably placed for safety-car conditions.

Brazilian Piquet Jr, who was recently sacked from his seat, and his three-times world champion father Nelson Piquet Sr had accused Renault of forcing him into the act.

Doel

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Like previous two occasions the Bangabandhu National Stadium will be the centre attraction when athletes from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka and new entrants Afghanistan and hosts Bangladesh assemble for the biggest jamboree of the region.

Mokaddes

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incompetent even before beginning their activities. It also said that the new committee started with a bid to expand chess all over the country and there will be an international rating chess tournament held from October 15 there has already been some initiatives taken to train the players at grassroots level.

Meanwhile, leading chess players including GMs Reefat Bin Sattar, Abdullah Al Rakib voted 'no-confidence' to the new committee. Besides, four members of the committee on Tuesday urged the government to announce an election date by the end of September, or else they would step down from the committee.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 17 "After arranging the fund, the president [Kazi Salahuddin] today (Wednesday) directed us to contract the AFC [Asian Football Confederation], which agreed to take the late entry and the team will take part in the qualifiers," informed BFF general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi.

Bangladesh are placed in Group E along with hosts Philippines, Japan, Indonesia, Mongolia and Chinese Taipei. They will play their first match against Indonesia on October 3 before facing Japan on October 5. The third and fourth matches against Mongolia and hosts Philippines will be played on October 8 and 9 respectively.

Bangladesh will play their fifth and final match against Chinese Taipei on October 13. Meanwhile, the BFF will have to give 22,000 dollars to the hosts for accommodation, food and local transport.

'CT will resurge ODIs'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The ICC is confident that the Champions Trophy in South Africa will prove that 50-over cricket remains a relevant format in cricket's shifting worldscape of greater financial reward and less time.

The tournament begins in Johannesburg on September 22, amid increasing questions about its significance in the game. The ECB has scrapped its domestic 50-over tournament and the ongoing ODI series between Australia and England has been widely derided in England as a poor afterthought; South Africa, according to the ICC's cricket manager Dave Richardson, may be toying with the idea of a four-innings format domestically, where each team bats twice, an idea that has found favour with Sachin Tendulkar, one of 50-over cricket's greatest batsmen. The ICC itself may look at the idea and some, like Anil Kumble, suggest making it a 40-over game. Others have called for scrapping the format altogether.

But the ICC believes a shorter, sharper Champions Trophy can prove that reports of ODI cricket's death have been exaggerated. "In the context of 50-over cricket this is an important tournament," Haroon Lorgat, chief executive ICC, said in a teleconference.

"It reminds me of a year ago when people were talking about the death of Test cricket, with no crowds being there and so on. Similarly with the ODI, I think we are maybe running ahead of ourselves. Look at England where there is a lot of interest still in the ODI series despite England being so far behind Australia, crowds are still turning up. Similarly in the recent tri-series in Sri Lanka. We will see here, with the Champions Trophy, that there is a place for the ODI format in cricket."

The glut of ODIs, rather than the format itself, is often seen as the real problem. Though

there is little the ICC can do about bilateral arrangements for seven-match ODIs and hastily-arranged tri-series, members have been told to keep in mind the problems of excess in the ongoing discussions to shape a new FTP. "These arrangements are made bilaterally by members," Lorgat said. "But in the current FTP discussions we always talk to members of the importance of a balance (between the formats). We're mindful and cognisant of it. The current FTP is a work in progress and we need to be aware of the balance during that."

Lorgat also suggested that there will not be too much tinkering with the format or introduction of innovations until the cricket committee gets together next May. "From an innovations point of view, we're always looking for new, exciting things. The batting Powerplay is a good example but we do not want to do too many things too quickly. Between the Champions Trophy and the 2011 World Cup, we are more in the mindset of retaining the format. Experts are in place on the cricket committee but I think we can leave it till next May."

The confidence within the ICC about the future of ODIs stems in part from the belief that they may finally, after years of trying, have hit on the right formula for the much-decried Champions Trophy. The event is much more streamlined than past editions, with only eight teams, all based at one venue. "We recognised that the tournament needed a bit of refreshing and relevance to ensure that it is a best of the best. We have made it a destination event where teams and everyone can settle in at one location for the whole event beginning to end and there is no routine of practice, play and fly again."

There is also greater prize money at stake and the lesser number of teams means most games will have something at stake. "There is differentiation in this Champions Trophy," Lorgat said, "and we are confident that we will see ODI cricket as a relevant format through this."

Highway named after Bolt

AFP, Kingston

The roadway along which the world's fastest man Usain Bolt crashed his car a few months ago will be renamed in his honour.

Jamaica Prime Minister Bruce Golding told Parliament on Tuesday that Highway 2000 would be called the Usain Bolt Highway.

The road connects the capital of Kingston in the east with Montego Bay in the far west of the country.

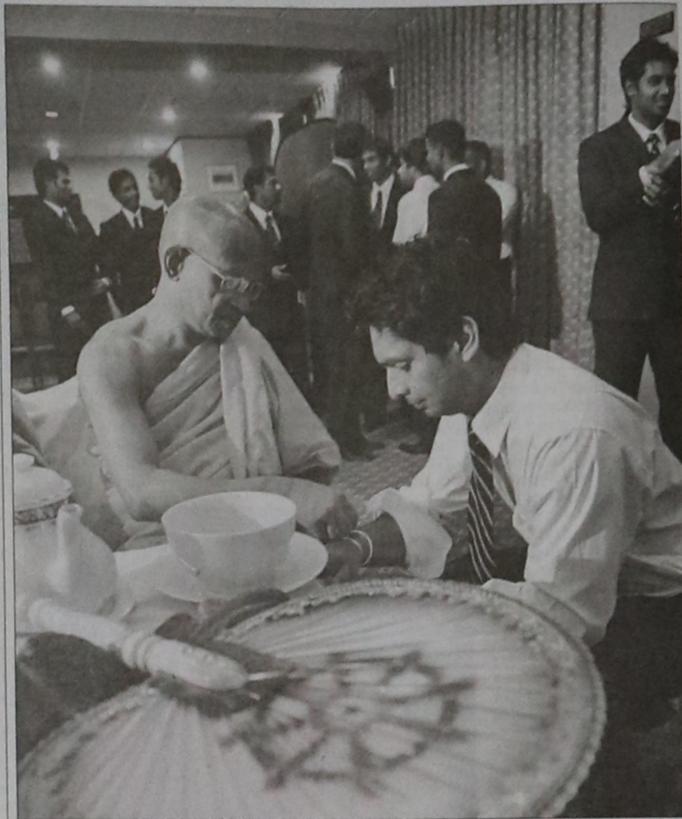
Only three Jamaican prime ministers -- Sir Alexander Bustamante, Norman Manley, Michael Manley have had highways named for them. Olympians Herb McKenley and Arthur Wint have also had roads named for them.

In Parliament Tuesday, Prime Minister Golding said Bolt's "endearing personality, charisma and passion for his country make him a superb ambassador of Jamaica."

He also announced that the country's fourth highest honour -- the Order of Jamaica, will be conferred on the 23-year-old sprinter.

Bolt will become the youngest person to receive such award. Bolt will also be appointed an Ambassador-at-Large and will be accorded full diplomatic status.

In April, Bolt suffered minor injuries in a car smash on Highway 2000.



A Sri Lankan Buddhist monk (L) ties a blessed white thread around cricket captain Kumar Sangakkara's wrist during a ritual at the Sri Lanka Cricket headquarters in Colombo on Wednesday. The team performed religious rituals ahead of their departure to South Africa to take part in the Champions Trophy.

Bane for pace

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out of the pool and there is no need to mention that I am getting less payment compared to the last season. It is also new experience to take part in a special transfer window though we had earlier participated in gorgeous transfer all together," said Tareq.

A total of eight players -- Talha Jubair (to Biman from Abahani), Tareq (to Biman from Mohammedan), Imran Ahmed (to Biman from Abahani), Nafis Iqbal (to Mohammedan from Gazi Tank), Ziaur Rahman (to Gazi Tank from Abahani), Imrul Kayes (to Abahani from Gazi Tank), Sohravordi Shuvo (to Gazi Tank from Mohammedan) and Shahadat (to Kalabagan from Biman) -- turned up yesterday to put pen to paper for their new clubs.

Left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak was supposed to sign for Gazi Tank from Biman but he is now in India for a family commitment.

"Razzak is now in India with his ailing mother and realistically could not attend today's window and if he is not given a special window to sign up, then we will request him to quit the Bangladesh A team," said Rokib Haider Pavel, coordinator of Gazi Tank.

Hannan Sarker (Surjo Torun), Nazmul Hossain Milon (CCS), Sahagir Hossain (Abahani), Rajin Saleh (Surjo Torun) and Dollar Mahmud (Mohammedan) didn't turn up on the day as they stayed at their old clubs.

The Premier Division Twenty20 Cricket League will start from October 10 while the one-day competition of the most coveted league is scheduled for October 23 to December 15.

Door ajar for WI stars

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies could yet field a full-strength squad at the Champions Trophy, with the ICC willing to accept a "revised" line-up in the event the industrial relations dispute between the board and the players is resolved. Despite setting an August 11 deadline for national boards to nominate their 15-man squads for the Champions Trophy, the ICC has advised the WICB it would take into account the exceptional circumstances brought on by the labour dispute and allow the likes of Chris Gayle, Denesh Ramdin and Shivnarine Chanderpaul to play at the tournament.

For that to happen, the WICB and the players would need to end their stand-off before West Indies' tournament opener against Pakistan at the Wanderers Ground on September 23. The recent breakdown in mediation talks between the two parties raised fears of a damaging and protracted split, although WIPA's announcement this week that it would accept CARICOM's six-point resolution plan may yet mark a turning point in the labour crisis.

Both the ICC and its broadcast partner, ESPN STAR Sports, have impressed upon the WICB their desire for a full-strength West Indies team to compete at the eight-team, two-week tournament in South Africa. The Champions Trophy has been criticized in the past for lacking context and prestige in an already crowded international calendar, and the ICC is hopeful the streamlined format -- and the 4-million dollar prize purse -- will reinvigorate the appetite of both the players and the public for the embattled tournament and the 50-over game in general.

A weakened West Indies squad is hardly in keeping with that ambition. The WICB controversially named a second-string squad for the Champions Trophy while locked in mediation talks with WIPA -- a move criticised by Bharat Jagdeo, the Guyanese president CARICOM chairman, and Sir Shridath Ramphal, the former Commonwealth secretary-general and CARICOM-appointed mediator -- but an ICC source told Cricinfo hope remained that an 11th-hour settlement would allow West Indies to field their elite squad.

The ICC has played a behind-the-scenes role

in the WICB-WIPA dispute, although Haroon Lorgat, the council's chief executive, would not be drawn on the specifics of their involvement. He did, however, call upon the West Indian board to restore senior players to the Champions Trophy squad; a move that would enhance the tournament's objective of pitting the best versus the best.

"We would be disappointed if the best team is not taken to South Africa, but we understand the complex situation that exists," Lorgat told Cricinfo. "The West Indies have the unfettered right to select whomever they choose."

Any move to return their elite players to the field would present the WICB with a sizeable logistical and cost issue. The Floyd Reifer-led West Indies squad have already arrived in South Africa and played two practice matches against provincial sides. The bulk of those players would presumably be recalled to the Caribbean should the path be cleared for the Windies' striking cricketers to return -- a scenario the cash-strapped board could do without.

But there is much at stake -- not least the desire of ESPN Star Sports to protect its reported 1.1-billion dollar broadcast deal with the ICC through to 2015. Manu Sawhney, ESPN Star Sport's managing director, delivered a veiled criticism of West Indies' current stance by stating his hope that "the unique position of the ICC Champions Trophy in the international cricket calendar will remain intact with the full participation of best available squads from all the competing teams."

"We firmly believe that the ICC Champions Trophy should be a premium international event where the best players from the top cricketing nations compete for the honours and are confident that the ICC and the cricketing community in general shares that belief," Sawhney told Cricinfo.

"As highlighted by you, lately there have been concerns regarding West Indies that have been raised in the media. As ICC's leading commercial partners, we continually maintain a dialogue with the ICC on various aspects of our relationship. However, it is our policy not to publicly comment on such discussions. We are proud of our association with the ICC and very much value this relationship."

Ricky helps Aus go

FROM PAGE 17

Hauritz back over his head, was given out lbw for 35 by Pakistani umpire Asad Rauf after attempting a reverse sweep having made 63 in both the previous two ODIs.

The under-rated Hauritz led Australia's attack with two wickets for 54 runs. Morgan revived England's innings with the match's first six, casually hoisting Johnson over long leg.

But he should have been out for 38 when he skied all-rounder Shane Watson to Hussey, who dropped the chance after four juggled attempts.

Morgan's display helped England, again resting the experienced duo of all-rounder Paul Collingwood and pacesman James Anderson, score 91 off the last 10 overs.

Scoreboard in the fifth one-day international between England and Australia at Trent Bridge on Tuesday:

ENGLAND				
Struss lbw b Hauritz	35			
Denly c Hussey b Johnson	45			
Bopara c Hauritz b Watson	18			
Prior st Paine b Hauritz	37			
Shah c Paine b Johnson	31			
Morgan c Siddle b Bracken	58			
Mascarenhas c Johnson b Watson	19			
Broad run out (Ponting)	22			
Rashid run out (Paine)	18			
Bresnan c Bracken b Siddle	4			
Sidebottom not out	3			
Extras: (lb-1, w-6, nb-2)	9			
Total: (All out in 50 overs)	299			
Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-95, 3-105, 4-165, 5-192, 6-230, 7-267, 8-272, 9-278.				
Bowler				
O	M	R	W	
Siddle	10	1	50	1

Bracken	8	1	43	1
Johnson	10	0	80	0
Watson	10	0	60	2
Hauritz	10	0	54	2
Clarke	2	0	11	0

AUSTRALIA
Watson c Mascarenhas b Bresnan 36
Paine c Rashid b Bresnan 16
Ponting c Shah b Broad 126
Clarke c Shah b Rashid 52
Hussey c Sidebottom b Mascarenhas 6
Ferguson lbw b Broad 17
White not out 24
Johnson not out 18
Extras: (b-1, w-6) 7
Total: (For 6 wickets in 48 overs) 302
Did not bat: Hauritz, Siddle, Bracken.

Fall of wickets: 1-45, 2-76, 3-209, 4-226, 5-255, 6-261.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Broad	9	0	57	2
Sidebottom	9.2	0	43	0
Bresnan	10	0	76	2
Mascarenhas	10	0	49	1
Rashid	7	0	55	1
Bopara	3	0	21	0

Result: Australia won by four wickets and lead seven-match series 5-0.
Man-of-the-match: Ricky Ponting.

Del Potro

FROM PAGE 17

"I think it's the best final ever in my life. If I beat Roger in three sets straight that's better, but it's impossible."

Federer -- who had just lost his first Grand Slam final to someone other than Rafael Nadal -- pondered the future of his conqueror.

"Rafa, we've had some epic great ones over the years," Federer said. "Who knows? Maybe Del Potro is going to join that thing as well."

Real thrash

FROM PAGE 17

Munich open their Champions League campaign with a 3-0 win at Maccabi Haifa.

Muller, who only turned 20 on Sunday, netted twice in the final five minutes to end Maccabi hopes of a comeback in the Group A clash in Israel.

The Germany Under-21 international justified his inclusion ahead of Mario Gomez as his late brace made the game safe for Bayern just as Maccabi were threatening to cancel out Daniel van Buyten's 64th-minute opener.

Elsewhere in the group Juventus and Bordeaux shared the spoils with a 1-1 draw on a rain-drenched evening at the Stadio Olimpico.

Vincenzo Iaquinta gave the home side the lead in the 63rd minute, but Jaroslav Plasil equalised 15 minutes from time - despite strong appeals for offside - to earn the French champions a point in Turin.

Inspection

FROM PAGE 17

take place in Dhaka on January 9 during the tri-nation one-day tournament involving India, Sri Lanka and hosts Bangladesh.

During the tri-series there will be a media launch as the organisers are planning to display the trophy and arrange other programmes. The match schedule will be made public on November 9 and it's all but confirmed that a group will not consist of more than two sub-continent teams.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Completely

4 Tarot cards' determination

8 Pack away

12 Vast expanse

13 Finished

14 One of the Three Bears

15 Optimistic

17 Wishes otherwise

18 Midas' desire

19 Snag

20 Basilica areas

22 Erstwhile ugly duckling

24 Men

25 Bits of trickery

29 Grecian vessel

30 Michael of tennis

31 Exist

32 GOP symbol

34 Recognized

35 Safe-cracker

36 Theater boxes

37 Bank structure

40 Hardy cabbage

41 Roughly

42 Pocket Books logo

46 Adolescent

47 Sandwich cookie

48 Possessive pronoun

49 They're prominent on

32-Across

50 Summer desserts

51 Born

Solution time: 25 mins.

DOWN

1 Fool

2 Meadow

3 "Auld street?"

4 Basketball no-nos

5 Eager

6 X rating?

7 Earlier than

8 Leap

9 Tense

10 Cartel

11 Lave

12 Departed

13 Carpet type

14 Parasite

15 Genealogy chart

16 "And so it..."

17 Reagan Cabinet member

18 Chillies and fever

19 Knitting stitch

20 Word on the street?

21 Departed

22 Carpet type

23 Genealogy chart

24 Fixes a seam

25 Guitarist

26 Atkins

27 Traffic cones

28 Caffeine-rich nut

29 Former capital of Nigeria

30 Cast a ballot

31 Vicinity

32 AOL client, e.g.

33 Dangling site

34 Japanese pond carp

35 Joan of --

36 Have bills

37 Inseparable

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13					14		
15		16						17		
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49				50					51	

CRYPTOQUIP

R L Y Q S G Y I S G H C M Y I
 M Y F M S K F H F P B G W T W K T B F
 E B I H Q X T Y X R H C L P K S B C E B H C L
 "Q S B O S H C Y T S Q H S O S K."
 Yesterday's Cryptoquip: MY WIFE WAS PERFORMING THIS KICKING DANCE REPEATEDLY, SO I FINALLY YELLED "CAN THE CANNAN!"
 Today's Cryptoquip Clue: C equals T