

Vettori shines in rain

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Daniel Vettori and Brendon McCullum punished Pakistan on a day on which only 36 overs of play were possible due to rain and bad light in Dunedin. When Vettori bunted Saeed Ajmal for a single minutes into the second session, he beat Shane Warne as the highest run-getter at No. 8. While Warne's 2005 runs came at an average of 19.09 in 91 Tests, Vettori got there in less than half the number of matches with an average of 43.86. Vettori, however, missed becoming the first No. 8 to score back-to-back Tests hundreds of one run.

The pitch seemed to have eased out on the second day. Pakistan went on the defensive too early, and Vettori and McCullum applied themselves remarkably during their 164-run seventh-wicket partnership. The seam bowlers did create a couple of chances, both against McCullum. The first was in the second over of the day when Mohammad Asif induced an outside edge that flew through third slip, a fielding position that was left vacant in order to have a deep point. McCullum had added one to his overnight 25 by then. In the 12th over, Umar Gul got a leading edge that flew over midwicket. Mohammad Aamer and Asif hit the bodies of McCullum and Vettori once each with bouncers. And that's all Pakistan had to cheer about.

All the cheer was in the New Zealand camp with their captain, statistically their best batsman in recent years, leading from the front. Vettori had trouble against the bouncer but anything loose

was punished with certainty. Both versions of the cut were on view; the full-blooded one to the left of point, the late one to the right. And when Vettori received one bouncer too many, he upper-cut Aamer over slips.

While Vettori was doing what came naturally to him - good eyes, smart batting, big heart - McCullum had to continue curbing his natural attacking game. He did that just fine in the last hour on the first evening, and improved on the second morning. After that

edge early in the day, he tightened his game further. He negated Asif effectively, covering all stumps, taking the lbw and bowled out of the equation by getting outside the line, and using soft hands when playing outside off. The odd over-pitched delivery was driven down the ground mercilessly.

Once Aamer and Asif were played out, with 41 runs added in 10 overs and both batsmen through to their fifties, it became more about accumulation against Saeed Ajmal and

Gul. Vettori was involved in a seventh-wicket 100-run partnership for the sixth time but, just when it seemed the duo was close to inflicting irreversible damage, Gul produced out-of-nowhere - a yorker on the last over before lunch to send McCullum back.

After the break, though, persistent rain sent the players in and they returned with hands in pockets deep into the final session. In the 4.5 overs possible before bad light ended play for good, Vettori drove nicely through covers, was again dropped at first slip, before missing out on a century. On 99, Vettori looked to cut a full delivery from Gul, and an edge finally went to hand, making sure Gul remained the only centurion in the match. The catcher in this case, Kamran Akmal, was the record-holder along with Vettori for most centuries for a No. 8, with three.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the second day of the first Test between New Zealand and Pakistan at University Oval in Dunedin on Wednesday:

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 276-6)			
	O	M	R
McIntosh b Aamer	0		
Guptill c Fawad b Aamer	60		
Flynn c Akmal b Asif	8		
Taylor c Farhat b Ajmal	94		
Fulton b Asif	29		
Elliott c Akmal b Asif	8		
McCullum b Gul	78		
Vettori c Akmal b Gul	99		
Bond not out	8		
O'Brien not out	2		
Extras: (lb-14, w-1, nb-3)	18		
Total: (For 8 wkt in 126 overs)	404		
To bat: Martin.			
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-27, 3-144, 4-192, 5-210, 6-211, 7-375, 8-402.			
Bowler	O	M	R
Aamer	24	3	87
Asif	31	5	98
Gul	34	10	115
Ajmal	37	10	90

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New Zealand skipper Daniel Vettori looks to the heavens after falling just one short of a hundred on the second day of the first Test against Pakistan at University Oval in Dunedin yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Sarwan doubtful for Brisbane Test

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Hyundai test

FROM PAGE 17

Ulsan finished eighth in the recently-concluded K-League and failed to reach the second round of the Asian Champions League finishing third in Group E behind Nagoya Grampus Eight of Japan and Australian side Newcastle Jets.

"We have come here to strengthen the tie between Korea and Bangladesh. Besides, the BFF president and the Korean Football Federation president have a cordial relation between them and the tour is the outcome of that," said Chul.

The coach is not a newcomer in Dhaka as he visited the Bangladesh capital back in 1996 when Ulsan Hyundai defeated Dhaka's Mohammedan SC 3-1 at home and went 5-0 down in away match in the Asia Cup Winners Cup.

End of road

FROM PAGE 17

past few weeks over what he sees as the banks controlling his side's purse strings, conceded that losing all three home matches had done for his team.

"That has been our biggest problem over the three home matches we've had, considering the fact we've taken points and looked comfortable away," Smith said. "We have never looked that way at home."

It would damage us a bit," Chris Gayle, the West Indies captain, said of the prospect of losing Sarwan for the first Test. "It's not good news, but we're going to keep working and hopefully tomorrow he'll be fit. He was one who got a few runs in the last game so he's in good nick. To lose him at this point in time is a crucial point in time, but if that's the case someone will have to stand up and contribute in whatever areas."

The back injury is the latest ailment to strike Sarwan this tour. He was inconvenienced

during the recent tour game against Queensland by a rash that kept him off the field on the third day. It was a minor irritation and he was able to bat in the second innings, but he also needed treatment after being struck on the left knee.

"In life things happen suddenly," Gayle said. "This is the case we have to deal with. It's not what we wanted at this point in time building up to the Test match. This is how it is now. We just have to try and be positive in whatever we do. We're not looking for any excuses. We're big men and we just have to handle our business out there in the middle regardless of what's been happening off the field."

West Indies desperately need Sarwan's veteran presence in the top of the order, especially considering the tired state of Gayle, who arrived in Brisbane on Wednesday morning following a mercy dash to Jamaica to be at the bedside of his ill mother. Sarwan's record in Australia is poor, with only two half-centuries in six Tests, but he managed a defiant 128 against Ricky Ponting's men in Antigua last year.

Ponting said the loss of Sarwan would serve as a "massive blow" for West Indies. "To have their captain going halfway round the world in the past couple of days and one of their better batsmen going down, it's obviously not a great start for them, but all we can do is prepare for both those guys to play," Ponting said. "We've talked about those guys' importance to their team, so we'll just wait and see what they come out with."

IPL deadline extended for Pakistan players

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The IPL has extended the deadline for Pakistan's players to submit the relevant documents needed to ensure their participation in next season's IPL, even as Pakistan's sports ministry seeks permission for the players to play there next year.

The league's chief executive, Sundar Raman, told Cricinfo that the deadline for the PCB to submit the no-objection certificates (NOCs) and other documents to enable the Pakistan players to take part in the 2010 tournament now stands extended to December 7.

With the Pakistan team currently playing a Test series in New Zealand, it became clear over the last week that the necessary paperwork would take more time. Wasim Bari, the PCB's chief operating officer, had earlier said the NOCs had already been sent by the board in order to initiate the visa process.

A possible hurdle, however, could be created by the National Assembly Standing Committee on Sports which raised questions over the NOCs. "The NOCs issued to the cricketers for participation in the IPL is without the approval of the federal government hence they are illegal," said Jamshed Ahmed Dasti, an increasingly vocal legislative voice against the Pakistan board and head of the committee. "Who will be responsible for security of the players, not least the federal government, because it was never consulted for issuance of the NOC."

Pakistan's sports ministry says it has no

problems with the players going to India, but insisted that it had to seek permission first from the foreign and interior ministry. NOCs from three players - Umar Gul, Sohail Tanvir and Abdul Razzaq - have been sent. "The (sports) ministry has referred the NOC cases of these players to the foreign office and interior ministry for political and security clearance," spokesman Faik Ali told AP.

"We processed the cases of these players on the very same day on urgent basis and we do hope to get the reply from both ministries by next week. The sports ministry has no objection that its players go and compete in IPL, but we have to seek the government's clearance. Our ministry has forwarded the cases to the concerned ministries and now we will wait for their response."

Pakistan's players were absent from the second IPL, held earlier this year in South Africa, after their government did not allow them to travel to India - where the tournament was originally to be held - for security reasons. The decision came in the wake of the Mumbai attacks last year, after which relations between India and Pakistan deteriorated considerably. Eleven players from Pakistan had taken part in the first IPL, though after the Mumbai attacks, only four were retained by their franchises, though their contracts were suspended until further resolution.

The PCB has been keen on getting their players involved once again after Ijaz Butt, the board chairman, raised the matter on a trip to India last month and said after that the relevant government authorities had also cleared Pakistan's players to play.

TALK TURKEY

Dave Whelan

(Wigan owner)

"I am a serious, serious defeat and we have got to get our heads up and I am sure Roberto will be working on the lads now to get them going again and get their heads back in the air and get some pride back in Wigan Athletic."

After being thrashed 9-1 by Tottenham in the Premier League on Monday,

Broad set to return

CRICINFO, undated

Stuart Broad is in contention for a return to the side for England's third ODI against South Africa at Newlands on Friday.

Broad has been sidelined with a shoulder injury since tumbling awkwardly in the field in England's opening warm-up game of the tour and missed the Twenty20 series, the washed-out opener to the one-day international series, and England's victory in the second ODI at Centurion.

However, he took a full part in England's training at Cape Town on Wednesday, and a team spokesman confirmed that he is fit and available for selection on Friday.

England's preparations for this tour have been ravaged by injury, with Broad's fellow seamers James Anderson and Graham Onions both suffering niggles and Graeme Swann still ruled out with a side strain. Alastair Cook is also unfit with a back problem.

Despite these difficulties, England having already gone one-up with three to play in the series, and can strengthen their side if, as expected, Broad returns for the struggling Sajid Mahmood.

Grade C (Rs 25 lakh): S Badrinath, Wasim Jaffer, Yusuf Pathan, Pragyan Ojha, Sreesanth, Dinesh Karthik, Amit Mishra.

Grade D (Rs 15 lakh): Piyush Chawla, Ravindra Jadeja, Robin Uthappa, Parthiv Patel, Cheteshwar Pujara, Mohammad Kaif, Virat Kohli, Ashok Dinda, Wridhiman Saha, M Vijay, R Ashwin, Shikhar Dhawan, Sudeep Tyagi, Dhawal Kulkarni, Abhishek Nayar, Ajinkya Rahane, Manoj Tiwary.

Scoreboard

Scoreboard at stumps on the second day of the second Test between India and Sri Lanka at the Green Park Stadium in Kanpur on Wednesday:

INDIA: First innings (overnight 417-2)

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