

Anxious times for Steyn

CRICINFO, undated

Dale Steyn is not a certain starter for the Boxing Day Test in Durban and expects an early decision to be made over his hamstring injury. The South African fast bowler was ruled out of the opening match at Centurion on the morning of the game, handing a debut to Friedel de Wet, who almost bowled South Africa to victory with 4 for 55 on the final day Sunday.

Steyn will spend the next two days putting in further rehabilitation work and remains hopeful of rejoining the South Africa line-up. However, he doesn't want any doubt hanging over the side as they prepare for the second Test and is targeting Wednesday -- when the squad meets up in Durban -- as his key time.

"I've got until Wednesday to get it ready," he told Crinfo. "I think we will make an early decision this time on whether I will play, rather than wait until the morning of the game. That puts other players under stress and basically throws the guys into the ocean."

"I'm hopeful. I was very keen to play in Pretoria and having a few more days off has given me extra time to get it right, so I don't see any reason why I shouldn't be ready for Boxing Day."

"I just want to make sure it's 100 per cent because we have a lot of cricket to play, not just against England but also a tour to India, and hamstrings can be quite a difficult area to sort out. Just when you think you've got it right, it hits you again and slows you down. We are hoping that everything will be right for Durban, that's the goal, and we've been working really hard."

PCL surprise!

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per match. After signing up the Pakistani duo, Top Sports chairman AKM Mahbubur Rashid said that they were waiting to come up with more surprises as each side of the league could field three foreign players against four registrations.

Naved played for Mohammedan while Razzak played for Abahani in the Premier Cricket League's Superphase.

Messi voted

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best players of the world.

Ronaldo won the Puskas award for his goal for Manchester United in the Champions League against Porto, while the following were elected into the FIFA/FIP World XI. Goalkeeper: Iker Cassilas (Real Madrid/Spain)

Defenders: John Terry (Chelsea/England), Nemanja Vidic (Manchester United/Serbia), Patrice Evra (Manchester United/France) and Dani Alves (Barcelona/Spain)

Midfielders: Xavi Hernandez (Barcelona/Spain); Andres Iniesta (Barcelona/Spain), Steven Gerrard (Liverpool/England)

Forwards: and Lionel Messi (Barcelona/Spain), Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid/Spain) and Fernando Torres (Liverpool/Spain)

FACTFILE

Name: Lionel Messi
Date of birth: June 24, 1987
Place of birth: Rosario, Argentina
Height: 1.69 m (5ft 7in)
Weight: 67kg
Playing position: Striker
International Caps: 44
Goals scored: 13
Club: Barcelona - since 2005
Club Honours
Primera Liga (3): 2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2008-2009
Spanish Cup (1): 2008-2009
Spanish SuperCup (3): 2005, 2006, 2009
UEFA Champions League (2): 2005-2006, 2008-2009
UEFA Super Cup (1): 2009
International Honours
FIFA U-20 World Cup: 2005
Olympic Gold Medal: 2008
Individual Honours
UEFA Champions League Top Scorer: 2008-2009 (9 goals)
Spanish footballer of the year: 2008-2009
FIFA World Player of the Year: 2009
Ballon d'Or: 2009



Did U Know?

Scotland were the only team not to be beaten in the 1974 World Cup.



Pakistan paceman Navedul Hasan (2nd from L) and all-rounder Abdul Razzak (2nd from R) attend a press conference at a city hotel on Monday after signing for Noakhali Top Sports in Port City League, which will be held in the desert city of Sharjah in March next year.

Awaiting some music!

CRICINFO, undated

It won't matter whether Ricky Ponting or Phillip Hughes play against Pakistan on Boxing Day, they can both expect a barrage of short balls. Australia are waiting on Ponting's fitness after he was hit on the left elbow ducking a Kemar Roach bouncer in Perth and Chris Gayle, the West Indies captain, said they unearthed a glaring weakness in the Australian's game.

Gayle said other teams should study the way Roach operated to Ponting in dismissing him three times in the series and forcing him to retire hurt. "Our plan to bowl short at him would really well and I think they are tactics that other Test teams can use with a lot of success against him," Gayle wrote in his Daily Telegraph column.

"Ricky is a person who will always hook and pull -- those are some of his favourite shots -- but they can also be his major weakness. If you have a bowler with a bit of pace I think you can give him some real trouble."

Gayle said Roach tried to hustle Ponting by bowling at his body and getting him to hook or pull. "Ricky definitely looked very uncomfortable," he said. "The plans that we came up with weren't from watching any videos of Ricky, they were just my gut instinct."

Hughes is on standby for Ponting and had his own problems with the short ball during the tour of England, which included some rough treatment from Steve Harmison in a warm-up game and Andrew Flintoff in two Tests. He has re-found form after being cut from the national squad and is hoping to get a chance to show he is ready for a long-term run in the side.

"Being dropped is a part of the sport, and I'm a big believer in that," Hughes said in the Sydney Morning Herald. "That's life. What has happened has happened."

"To be in a squad now for a Boxing Day Test, it's the one as a kid you always love to watch and always want to be involved in. It's such a big thing. I've been feeling good in myself but to get the numbers on the board in this game [he scored 122 and 7 against Victoria] ... I'll go to Melbourne and be ready if a chance does come up."

Watson was 'baited'?

CRICINFO, undated

Shane Watson has justified his exuberant celebration of Chris Gayle's dismissal in Perth by saying he was baited by the West Indies captain. Watson was fined 15 per cent of his match fee for his roaring celebration in the second innings on Saturday and has been criticised for his behaviour, with Geoff Lawson likening it to a four-year-old's tantrum.

"There was a bit of build up to it, so it's always nice to get Chris Gayle out, he's obviously one of the most devastating batsmen in the world at the moment,"

Watson told AAP. "He definitely let me know that he was keen for me to come on to bowl leading up to that, so it was very nice to get him out first ball."

"That was the catalyst for me celebrating the way I did ... I know there's a line and I was extremely happy to get him out, I normally don't celebrate to that extent when I get someone out. But when he baits me, talking about wanting me to come on to bowl to be able to take me down, it's always very nice to get the upper hand."

Gayle said Watson over-reacted but was happy "to move on and let bygones be bygones." "Watson didn't actually say anything to me," Gayle wrote in his Daily

Telegraph column. "He just kept screaming in my direction."

"He has a bit of a temper and is pretty emotional so he was probably just letting it all out. Each player is different and getting me out came at a crucial time in an important Test match. There is no doubt he over-reacted but I am prepared to move on and let bygones be bygones."

Watson did admit his antics were over the top and they added to a busy Test for the match referee Chris Broad. Suliman Benn, the left-arm spinner, was banned for two ODIs for his exchanges with the fined Mitchell Johnson and Brad Haddin during Australia's first innings.

Sachin sees India home

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and six fours in his 81-ball knock.

But India fought back after the dismissal of Sangakkara, stumped by Karthik off part-time spinner Sehwag. They then never allowed Sri Lanka to build a partnership, striking at regular intervals.

Paceman Ishant Sharma, who conceded 46 runs in his opening three overs, came back strongly to remove Thilina Kandamby for 22 and Suraj Randiv off successive deliveries.

SCOREBOARD

Complete scoreboard of the

third one-day international between India and Sri Lanka at the Barabati Stadium in Cuttack on Monday:

SRI LANKA: 239 all out in 44.2 overs (Tharanga 73, Sangakkara 46, Dilshan 41, Kandamby 22; Jadeja 4-32, Nehra 2-32, Ishant 2-63)

INDIA: Sehwag c Dilshan b Welegedara 44, Tendulkar not out 96, Gambhir c and b Randiv 32, Yuvraj c Sangakkara b Welegedara 23, Karthik not out 36

Extras: (lb-5, w-6) 11
Total: (For 3 wks in 42.4 overs) 242
Fall of wickets: 1-55, 2-127, 3-

169
Did not bat: Raina, Jadeja, Harbhajan, Zaheer, Nehra, Ishant

Bowler O M R W
Welegedara 8 1 35 2
Kulasekara 8 0 47 0
Malinga 9.4 1 55 0
Mendis 9 0 67 0
Randiv 8 1 33 1

Result: India won by seven wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Ravindra Jadeja.

Toss: Sri Lanka.

Umpires: Marais Erasmus and Sanjay Hazare.

Fourth ODI: Dec 24, Kolkata.

Mashrafe retained

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"We will appoint a new selector very soon. We don't think there are any hard-and-fast rules in the terms and condition," said Yunus.

SHAKIL KASEM NAMED HEAD OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF NCA

The management committee for the GP-BCB National Cricket Academy (NCA) has been approved. Former cricketers and former chairman of the development committee Shakil Kasem will head the committee.

The other members are Gazi Ashraf Hossain, ASM Roquibul

Hasan, Mohammed Jalal Yunus, Selim Shahed, Jahangir Shah Badshah, Golam Mortaza and a representative from Grameenphone, who are sponsoring the academy.

"A" TEAM LOCAL SUPPORT STAFF

BCB has decided to appoint some local staffs for the Bangladesh A team. Former national skipper Minhazul Abedin is likely to be appointed as head coach of the second string Bangladesh side.

EIGHT-MEMBER COMMITTEE FOR 2011 WORLD CUP

An eight-member committee

has been formed for monitoring the development work and procurement related to the 2011 World Cup and the members are Mahbubul Anam, Dewan Shafiqul Arefin, Gazi Ashraf Hossain, GS Hassan Chowdhury, Mohammed Jalal Yunus, Syed Zahid Hossain, Shafiqur Rahman and Sirajuddin Mohammed Alamgir.

EXCLUSIVE MEETING FOR AGM

An exclusive meeting will be held sometime next month to discuss on the next AGM.

"Everything will be finalised in this meeting," informed Yunus.

Veeru thanks bowlers

CRICINFO, undated

Indian captain Virender Sehwag has praised his bowlers for their performance in the third ODI against Sri Lanka in Cuttack. The hosts won comfortably by seven wickets on Monday to take a 2-1 lead in the five-match series.

After Kumar Sangakkara, his opposite number, opted to bat, a solid performance from Sri Lanka's top order had put them on course for a massive total but India's bowlers hit back to shoot out the visitors -- who were 160 for 1 after 22 overs -- for 239 in the 45th over.

"The credit for this victory ought to go to the bowlers, especially Harbhajan [Singh] and [Ravindra] Jadeja," Sehwag said. "The wicket was slow and it kept low at times and it helped the spinners a bit."

"With the kind of start they got, I was praying they wouldn't get 350 or 400 on the board," Sehwag said. "But we were constantly looking to take wickets and Ashish Nehra did a fantastic job during the Powerplay."

"Once he got [Tillakaratne] Dilshan out, Harbhajan and Jadeja did their job very well and the game turned on its head."

Sehwag then got India's chase off to a lightning start with 44 from 28 deliveries, while fellow-opener Sachin Tendulkar remained

unbeaten on 96 as India made light work of the target, getting home with 7.2 overs to spare.

"My job is to give the team a good start and score as many as I can," Sehwag said. "I was in good form and I utilised the first 10 overs very well. Tendulkar then played right through the innings and ensured we won. Overall, this was an excellent team performance."

His Sri Lankan counterpart blamed the defeat on the poor batting display after his side lost their last eight wickets for 74 runs. "We had everything going for us: a blazing start, a good partnership which I managed to put on with Tharanga which gave us a good base," Sangakkara said. "But too many wickets lost and that was probably the story of the game."

"We didn't really have a target in mind at the start but the focus was on keeping rhythm, working hard and building partnerships. We just lost too many wickets and with it momentum."

Sangakkara said Sri Lanka had effectively lost the game in the early overs of the Indian reply. "We had to try and get something with the new ball but these are not the easiest of wickets to bowl on. The bowlers did a really good job and we were good in the field as well but we really had nothing to defend."

"We need to take a good look at ourselves as individuals and take a lot more responsibility when we get out there again. We have got to keep fighting and we have got to come back."

Who after Ntini?

CRICINFO, undated

South African cricket's celebration of Makhaya Ntini's 100th Test was tinged with concern about the shortage of obvious successors to take over as a black African standard bearer in the sport.

Gerald Majola, chief executive of Cricket South Africa, said unearthing and nurturing black African talent was a top priority but what happens when Ntini is no longer a part of the side?

The fast bowler, at 32, is showing signs of diminishing pace and prowess and his landmark Test against England, which ended in a draw here on Sunday, brought him only two wickets at a cost of 119 runs.

"Black Africans are the majority in South Africa so it is very important that they are represented in our national team," said Majola.

"There are a lot of youngsters coming through and we have put systems in place to identify and fast-track them."

Although there is always likely to be pressure, particularly from politicians, Majola said black Africans would not be rushed into the national side just to ensure representivity.

"We will never put any player in the national team unless they are ready," he said.

Ntini made his Test debut in 1997/98 and has been a regular member of the side since 2000, but he remains the only black African to hold down a regular place.

Fellow fast bowler Mfuneke Ngam played in three Tests in 2000/01 and looked the genuine article, a bowler of genuine pace with an action remarkably similar to that of the great Allan Donald.

But his career was cut short by a succession of injuries.

Although Ngam is no longer playing, he was recently appointed as head of a cricket academy based at Fort Hare University in the rural Eastern Cape, an area which has a

strong cricket tradition.

Thami Tsolekile, a wicketkeeper, played in three Tests in 2004/05 but subsequently lost form, although this season he has performed well for the Gauteng Lions franchise.

Monde Zondeki, another fast bowler, played in six Tests spread over more than five years, the most recent last season. He too has suffered injury setbacks and on his current form for the Cape Cobras franchise is not a contender for another cap.

Four other black Africans -- fast bowler Victor Mpsitang, off-spinner Thandi Tshabalala, batsman Lungile "Loots" Bosman and left-arm fast bowler Lonwabo Tsotsobe -- have played in one-day internationals.

The most obvious successor to Ntini is the tall Tsotsobe, 25.

He toured Australia with the South African team last summer and took four for 50 on his one-day international debut in the final match in Perth.

He was a member of the squad for the home Tests against Australia but had to have knee surgery which put him out of action for the rest of the season.

In contrast to the situation early in Ntini's career when he was almost alone as a black African at top provincial level, 13 Africans have played in franchise cricket during the current season.

Anton Ferreira, a former South African one-day player during the rebel tour era when South Africa were excluded from official international cricket because of apartheid, is excited about the amount of indigenous talent coming through.

Ferreira, in charge of the national cricket academy and a selector at under-19 level, says old stereotypes no longer apply.

"A few years ago most of the talented black players were fast bowlers but now we are seeing batsmen, slow bowlers and wicketkeepers as well."

One player Ferreira believes could be playing

international cricket within the next few years is Mangaliso Mosehle, a wicketkeeper and talented batsman who starred for the South African under-19 team against their English counterparts last season.

Some of the best African talent has been nurtured through bursaries at traditional cricket-playing schools.

Omphile Ramela, 21, was born in Soweto but educated at the private St John's College in Johannesburg and is currently studying at Stellenbosch University.

He captains the university team and also leads the Boland amateur side. He made his debut for the Cape Cobras against the Lions last month and made 87.

Majola said he expected even more talented Africans to emerge through the schools system, the Fort Hare academy, the national academy headed by Ferreira and a high performance programme and emerging players squad under the guidance of former South African fast bowler Corrie van Zyl.

"There is no such thing as the next Ntini. He is special," said Majola.

"But every young player coming through can learn from Makhaya. It doesn't come easy but he has shown that you can succeed if you are prepared to work hard."

"In the next few years I am confident there will be several black Africans in the national side."

BCB, Nimbus

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A fresh initiative meant it was wasteful of money as the board few months back paid a handsome amount to the Institute of Business Administration of Dhaka University for short-listing possible candidates.

It was learnt that as usually some directors showed their disinterest about appointing a high-profile CEO, but president AFM Mustafa Kamal was adamant to keep his promise he made soon after he was appointed the president of the country's richest sports body.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Cauldron
4 Harvest goddess
7 One of Franklin's certainties
12 Inseparable
13 Tear
14 Pond
15 Felonious flight
16 Keeps changing one's mind
18 Shril bark
19 Nimble
20 Front of a ship
22 Matter-horn, for one
23 Spill the beans
27 Rowing need
29 Private gesture?
31 Extra benefit
34 Orion's brightest star

DOWN

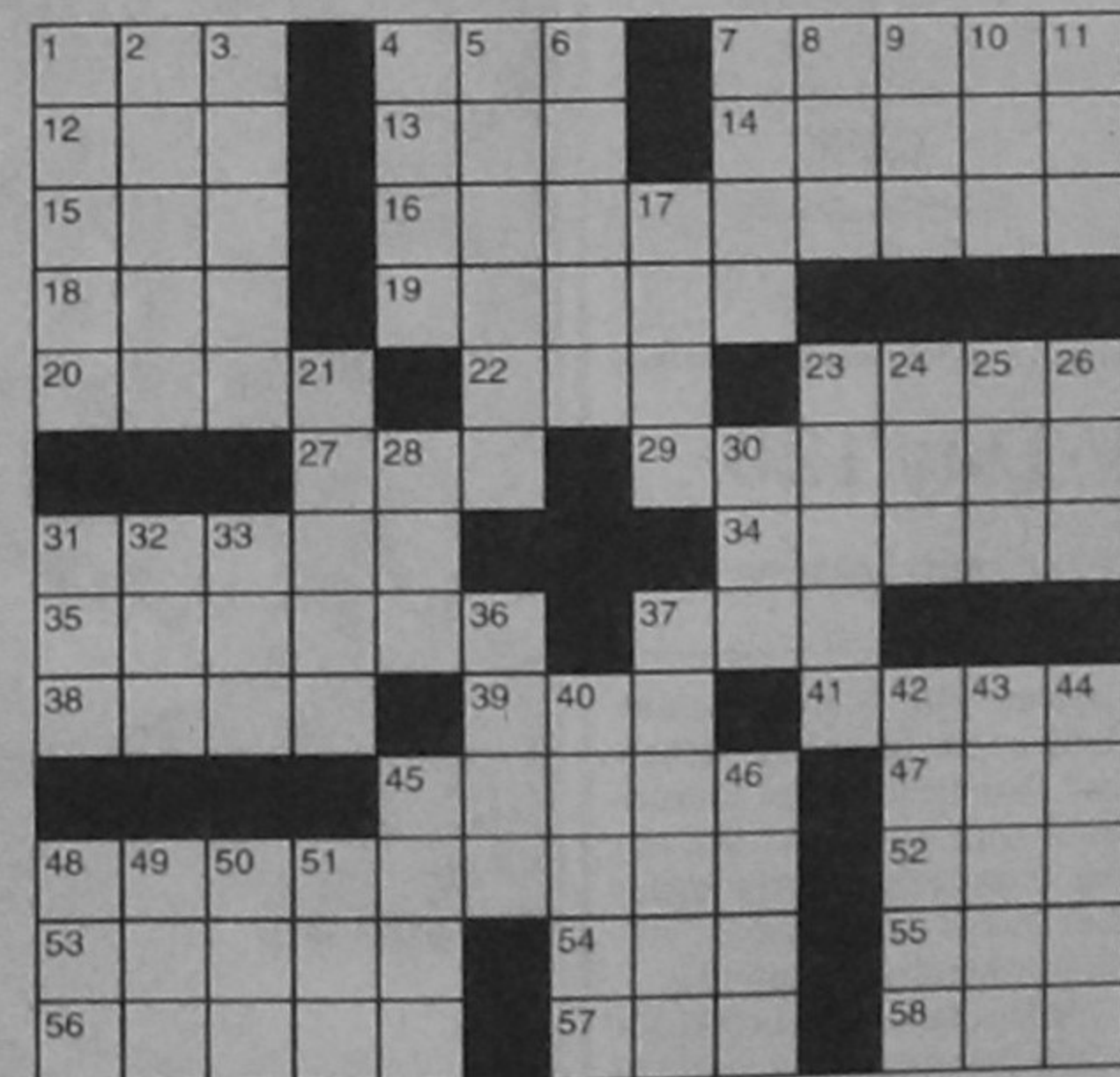
1 Coral producer
2 Where the elated walk
3 Beat
4 Composer
5 Post
6 Sales pitch
7 Loony
8 Right angle
9 Past
10 Spigot
11 Father and son
17 Energizes, with "up"
21 Made on a loom
23 A big rush
24 Drag along
58 Crafty

ACROSS

26 -- canto
28 Nay canceler
30 Jackie's second mate
31 Coll. transcript stat
32 Piratic potation
33 Exist
36 Carvey or Delany
37 "Deal or No Deal" fixture
40 Insurance ad lizard
42 October birth-stones
43 Belly-button
44 Plaintive poem
45 Open slightly
46 Despot
48 Sky safety org.
49 Parcel of land
50 Museum stuff
51 Bake sale grp.

DOWN

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CRYPTOQUIP

E P M Y A Z I S Q Z C B A M S S Y P B

R B Z R S B E P Z O M T N B Q Y P B

E O T Y B O Z H " Z P ! N I N M C C M " ?

H Z N Y B O R M O B C Y N .

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: FAMOUS SITCOM ABOUT A HAIR-COLORING SALON RUN BY A MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTERS: "FAMILY DYES."

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: R equals P