



PHOTO: AFP

Australia skipper Alex Blackwell (back) takes a run as an Indian player tries to stop the ball during the ICC Women's World Twenty20 semifinal at the Beausjour Cricket Ground in Saint Lucia on Thursday.

Broad glad he missed IPL

AFP, Gros Islet

Stuart Broad said he'd no regrets about missing out on the Indian Premier League (IPL) after helping England into the final of the World Twenty20.

The 23-year-old pace bowler all-rounder took two wickets for 21 runs as England thrashed Sri Lanka, last year's losing finalists, by seven wickets in a one-sided semifinal at the Beausejour Stadium here on Thursday.

Broad, one of the stars of England's 2009 Ashes series win over Australia, could have played in the IPL, a Twenty20 domestic competition in India which attracts some of world cricket's leading players.

Broad and Ryan Sidebottom both showed considerable nerves in repeatedly deploying the slow bouncer, a delivery a batsman might easily turn into a long-hop, to good effect against Sri Lanka.

"The batsmen tell us what they've found it difficult on certain wickets," Broad said.

"We just thought that the slower the ball, with these big boundaries, the harder it would be to hit," added Broad, the son of former

England opening batsman and current International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Chris.

"My personal theory was to try to bowl as slow as I possibly could and try to make the batsmen put all the pace on the ball to clear the ropes.

"It's a lot of practice in the nets. What I try to do is mix it up with a decent-paced ball as well because there's no point letting the batsmen get completely settled into what you're doing."

However, Broad said he would likely employ different tactics in Sunday's final on the faster Kensington Oval pitch, where England will face either defending champions Pakistan or arch-rivals Australia.

"But that will potentially all change, looking at the wicket in Barbados. We might have to adjust and play differently there."

England have never won a major limited overs tournament and their last experience of a final was at the 2004 Champions Trophy, when they lost to the West Indies at the Oval.

Paul Collingwood, now England's Twenty20 captain, is the only survivor from that side in the squad and Broad said of making it through to Sunday's showpiece: "It's huge. It's something only Colly has the experience of, playing in an ICC final."

"The great thing is the confidence and the fantastic team spirit, wanting everyone to do well and enjoying each other's success."

And with England in good form, Broad had no complaints about turning down a potentially lucrative IPL deal.

"I think that's been an important thing in this side that everyone has felt fresh. I can't look back and moan at any of my decisions. I took them for the right reasons and hopefully, on Sunday, the very right reasons."

LOCAL SNIPPETS

SPORTS REPORTER

Comilla will take on Narail in the final of the Jesco International Youth Volleyball competition at the Sultan Roundabout in Narail.

The hosts defeated favourites Dhaka 25-16, 25-20, 22-25, 25-16 in the second semifinal after Comilla beat Noakhali 25-14, 25-12, 22-25, 28-26 in the first semifinal.

The final will be held at the same venue in the afternoon after Dhaka and Noakhali face each other in the third-place play-off.

DIVISIONAL KARATE

Dhaka became champions in the 4th Electra Divisional Karate Championship at the NSC Auditorium in the city yesterday.

In the men's section Parvez (Kata), Sharif (55kg), Lokman (below 67kg), Jony (over 67kg) and in the women's section Shelley (53kg), Farhana (below 60kg) and Munni Khanm (Kata) won the eight gold medals for Dhaka.

Narayanan came second with two gold medals and a silver prize.

MANIKGANJ CRICKET

Our Correspondent adds: Kulfa Gosthi defeated Provat Sangha by 135 runs in the Col (ret) Malek Smriti First Division at the Shaheed Miraz-Tapan Stadium here yesterday.

Batting first, Kulfa Gosthi made 249 runs in 40 overs with Kajol scoring 106 runs.

In reply, Provat Sangha were all out for only 114 runs in 30.2 overs.

RAPID CHESS

FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon and Md. Masum Hossain are jointly leading the Weekly Rapid chess tournament.

Both are on four points after the fourth round played at the BCF hall-room yesterday.

The event is being held in seven round Swiss-League System with 58 players are participating.

S Africa

FROM PAGE 17 off 78 balls that had nine boundaries.

Rilee Roussouw scored a rapid 64-ball 80 that had nine fours and a six, and took the South Africans towards a huge score which they eventually achieved. The left-hander had good support from Colin Ingram, who batted well for his 41.

David Miller, who earned a call-up in the South Africa national side for the one-dayers in West Indies, struck a boundary-filled 23 off 14 balls.

The Caribbean bowlers struggled mostly, especially the pacemen who were so good in the league matches of the competition. Lionel Baker and Gavin Tonge went wicketless and were expensive and only Nelon Pascal took two very expensive wickets for 83 runs.

Off-spinner Shane Shillingford took two for 50 and Imran Khan took one.

Smith was adjudged man-of-the-match while Bravo earned the man-of-the-tournament award.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH AFRICA A: 328-7 in 50 overs (van Zyl 62, Roussouw 80, Ingram 41, Pascal 2-83, Shillingford 2-50). **WEST INDIES A:** 323-6 in 50 overs (Smith 115, Bravo 69, Walton 64; Tsotsobe 3-76).

Result: South Africa A won by five runs.

Man-of-the-match: Devon Smith.

Man-of-the-tournament: Darren Bravo.

'Eng not far off Aus'

AFP, Gros Islet

WORLD TWENTY20 WEST INDIES 2010 Australia may have been the team to beat at the World Twenty20 but England captain Paul Collingwood is confident his side can stay with them should their old rivals reach the final.

England swept into Sunday's tournament finale at the Kensington Oval in Barbados with a dominating seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka, last year's losing finalists, at the Beausejour Stadium here on Thursday.

They now await the winners of Friday's second semifinal, between Australia and defending champions Pakistan.

Australia, with pace bowlers Dirk Nannes, Shaun Tait and Mitchell Johnson leading the way and with a deep batting line-up, are unbeaten at the tournament so far.

The Kensington pitch, quicker in pace than the one at Beausejour, should suit Australia's fast men.

But the England seamers, who reduced Sri Lanka to 26 for three inside five overs, will relish the extra bounce too.

Asked if England were playing a similar brand of cricket to Australia, Collingwood replied: "We are not far off, they are a very powerful side themselves and obviously have a lot of pace in their attack."

"It's going to be a proper head to head that one on Sunday -- if we were to play Australia."

"I think everybody on the outside would want to see an England-Australia game but you've got to be careful."

"Pakistan are still a very dangerous side, you've got to show them a lot of respect. They are the world champions so no matter who we come up against we are going to have to continue to play the way we have played and hopefully that will be good enough."

"We are just happy to be in the final but we haven't won anything yet and I am going to keep

drilling that into the guys."

Turning to the Kensington pitch, Collingwood added: "We probably put in our best performance of the tournament in against South Africa in Barbados (a 39-run win) and we played four games there, two warm-up games and two in the competition."

"I think the batters do like the ball coming on and obviously the bowlers do like the pace coming through but again we are going to have to look at who we play against."

England have never won a major one-day international trophy -- Sunday's match will be their first final since they lost in the 2004 Champions Trophy to the West Indies at the Oval -- and in Twenty20 in particular they have struggled to find a reliable opening partnership.

But it seems it may be a case of 17th time lucky -- the number of opening pairs they've used in Twenty20 -- in Craig Kieswetter and Michael Lumb.

The duo's selection was not without controversy.

Both men were born and raised in South Africa, with Kieswetter a former South Africa Under-19 international although Lumb's father, Richard, opened the batting for Yorkshire alongside England great Geoffrey Boycott.

However, there is no denying their worth to the side which was proved again on Thursday by a rapid stand of 68 in just more than eight overs which ended any lingering hopes Sri Lanka had of victory.

Neither man had played a Twenty20 international before this tournament but Collingwood said: "Sometimes they are the finishing pieces of a jigsaw."

"We had some very good players but this is what we needed, a spark at the top of the order."

"Everybody saw it as a bit of a gamble, but we selected them on potential and we knew exactly what they could do."

"They've batted fantastically well and really helped the middle order to overcome totals."

Dordoi crush New

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Danish striker Ghavghani Masavi Shayan and defender Sagar Thapa spoiled both of the opportunities. The game was played amid boiling heat, which meant that the game was basically played at walking pace and the players of both sides were seen to take a break whenever they had the chance.

Dordoi should have doubled the lead in stoppage time of the first half, but it was much relief for the Nepalese side, who saw Dordoi's Amirov Ildar, who struck twice in the previous match, drove outside despite having an open net.

After resumption, New Road Team had a lion share of the ball possession, but could not create any clear chances, rather they conceded two more goals.

In the 74th minute, Kniazev Sergey whipped in a cross

from the right and Volos slammed a glancing header past goalkeeper Surendra Kumar and five minutes from time, it was Volos again and the striker this time rose high to head a Sataev Nurkal corner home to ensure the rout.

Despite winning the second successive victory, Dordoi's Russian coach Dvoryankov Sergey was not happy with the way his boys played rather he praised the opponents for their control of the game. He, however, said that the match was very hard compared to their first match because of the sweltering heat.

New Road Team's coach Yogamber Man Suwal said two-time champions Dordoi were better on the pitch and took full advantage of the players' physical height.

He, however, thought that his boys missed a couple of good chances to score.

Abahani held

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Hasun goalkeeper Ming Hung Hsu, but the Ghanaian striker took much time and the chance went begging in the 84th minute.

With five minutes to go, Hasun almost took a lead when a well-judged header from Cheng Tsung went inches over the bar.

Abahani's most easiest chance came in the stoppage time of the second half when Motiur Munna entered the box from the right to cut it for an unmarked Awudu, who unbelievably failed to send the ball in an open net and Abahani left the field with heads held low.

"Forwards sank us," said Abahani manager Satyjit Das Rupu adding that they have now no alternative but to win against Dordoi in the last match if they want to qualify for the four-team finals.

The last ten minutes of the

match was played in a complete downpour with the wind knocking off the visitors' dugout.

TEAMS

ABAHANI: Biplob Bhattacharjee, Samad Yousuf, Mohammad Sujun, Rajani Kanta Barman, Ibnul Siraji (Shaheedul Alam), Atiqur Rahman Mishu, Motiur Munna, Mehdi Hasan Ujjal (Abul Hossain), Zahed Parvez Chowdhury, Awudu Ibrahim and Enamul Haque.

HASUN NTCPE: Chen Hao Fan, Cheng Tsung Huang, Che Yuan Chan, Jian Liang Lee, Chang Lun Lin, Ming Hung Hsu, Chao Hsun Yang, Po Liang Chen, Chien Chin Chang (Chun Hung), Chen Hsun Hsu and De Cai Su (Chai Kun).

Red card: Chao Hsun Yang (Hasun).

Referee: Orzuev Dil Ovarshokh (Tajikistan).

Venus reaches Madrid semis

AFP, Madrid

Venus Williams reinforced her pending move back to the world number two ranking with a 6-3, 6-3 defeat of Samantha Stosur to reach the semifinals of the Madrid Masters on Friday.

Williams, who began this week on fourth, will fall in behind her top-ranked sister Serena on the Monday WTA list, with the pair heading the table for the first time in seven years.

French Open semifinalist Stosur, set for a career-high boost to seventh, has been the standout of the clay campaign, winning 14 of 15 matches coming into her clash with the American with a title in Charleston and a losing final -- her only other clay defeat in 2010 -- to Justine Henin.

But as in their three previous meetings, Williams claimed the victory, going through to the last four against either Israeli Shahar Peer of Li Na of China.

Hussey pulls

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He pulled a quicker short ball over the mid-wicket boundary and then blasted the next delivery way over long-on.

Hussey followed up by slashing a four backward of point before whacking the penultimate delivery for another six over long-on.

"By the end I was just swinging through the ball there ... it was probably one of the best innings of my life," said Hussey.

Earlier, brothers Kamran and Umar Akmal struck half-centuries as Pakistan piled up an imposing total of 191 for six.

BRIEF SCORES

PAKISTAN: 191-6, 20 overs (U Akmal 56 no; K Akmal 50)

AUSTRALIA: 197-7, 19.5 overs (M Hussey 60 no; M Aamer 3-35)

Result: Australia won by three wickets
M-O-M: Michael Hussey

WORLD TWENTY20 Aus women in final

AFP, Gros Islet

Australia captain Alex Blackwell led from the front as her side advanced into the women's World Twenty20 final with a seven-wicket win over India here on Thursday.

Blackwell's 61 -- her maiden fifty at this level -- was the centrepiece of Australia's successful pursuit of a target of 120.

Her innings was all the more impressive as Blackwell, only leading the side because wicketkeeper/batsman Jodie Fields withdrew before the tournament with a hamstring injury, came in with the score one for one.

But together with left-handed opener Shelley Nitschke (22), she shared a second-wicket stand of 74 that ended Indian hopes.

By the time Blackwell was stumped by Sulakshana Naik off leg-spinner Priyanka Roy, Australia were 101 for three and in sight of victory.

Blackwell faced 49 balls, including eight fours.

Leah Poulton, unbeaten on 30, ended the match with seven balls to spare with a boundary.

Australia, who lost in last year's semi-final to eventual champions England, will face the winners of Friday's match between the West Indies and New Zealand in Sunday's final at Barbados's Kensington Oval.



PHOTO: COURTESY

South Africa A team pose with the trophy after their close five-run win over West Indies A in the final of the tri-nation series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Bond calls

FROM PAGE 17 myself up for training is tougher."

Looking ahead, he was not enthusiastic about doing the work required to ensure he was fully fit for upcoming tours to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and India.

Not only injury interrupted Bond's career.

He joined the rebel Indian Cricket League (ICL) in 2008, believing he had an understanding with New Zealand Cricket that he would be able to continue playing for his country. But he was subsequently banned when the ICL was declared an unauthorised competition.

He returned to the national team last year and insisted Friday there were no hard feelings over the episode.

"I finish happy, no ill-feeling towards anyone. I've been very lucky during my career, I've had ups and downs but I look back with great pride."

New Zealand Cricket chief executive Justin Vaughan said Bond would be "almost impossible to replace".

Captain Daniel Vettori agreed, saying New Zealand had been lucky to have a player of Bond's stature.

Federer, Nadal on course

Tennis

AFP, Madrid

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal edged closer to a dream Madrid Masters final on Thursday with straight-sets quarterfinal victories which further served to whet fans' appetites ahead of the French Open.

With Roland Garros -- a key marker for holder Federer and four-time winner Nadal -- starting a week from Sunday, the countdown is taking on extra urgency for the old rivals.

Number one Federer came through against fellow Swiss Stanislas Wawrinka, carving out a 6-3, 6-1 win after gaining early momentum by breaking his Davis Cup teammate on a fourth opportunity in the second game of the match.

From then on, Federer's huge game began to flow as he took aim at repeating his breakthrough title at the Caja Magica from a year ago.

Federer iced the first set after 42 minutes with his fifth ace and moved purposefully into the second with a break in the opening game and another in the third on his way to the comfortable win.

"I'm very happy with how I played, it's never easy playing a countryman," said Federer, who now faces Latvian Ernests Gulbis, who put out Feliciano Lopez 6-2, 7-6 (7/0).

Gulbis defeated Federer at the Rome Masters last month.

"To beat Stan on his best surface is excellent. I'm feeling great about my play now," added Federer.

"I haven't had that many matches in the last few weeks, but I won the French Open and no matter how tough the clay season is, I can walk around with a smile on my face."

Nadal reached the quarterfinals for the sixth consecutive year when he smothered the huge serving of American 13th seed John Isner to claim a 7-5, 6-4 victory.

The Spanish second seed, who was the 2005 champion when the event was played on indoor hardcourt, held Isner to a mere 11 aces on a chilly day with the roof closed in case of rain.

Nadal has already lifted titles at his first two clay tournaments in 2010 -- the Masters 1000 events in Monte Carlo and Rome -- as he builds up towards the French Open.

"It was a dangerous, difficult match," said Nadal, who next faces French 12th seed Gael Monfils, a winner over Guillermo Garcia-Lopez 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

Nadal won his last match against Monfils in the US Open fourth round last year despite suffering an abdominal injury.

"Gael is a charismatic player, he plays fast and aggressive. He can change strategy suddenly and is very confident."

British third seed Andy Murray eased past Romania's Victor Hanescu 6-2, 6-1.

"Today was better than my previous match," said the Scot, who went 1-2 at the start of the clay season and now faced Spain's David Ferrer, a 6-3, 6-2 winner over Marin Cilic.

"I served better and made less mistakes. I'll have to do even better tomorrow," he said of Ferrer, who beat him in Rome a fortnight ago.

Battle of the Giants on

SPORTS REPORTER

Team Argentina of North South University beat team Brazil of Inaugural University 2-0 in the inaugural match of the 'Nescafe 3 in 1 Battle of the Giants' football tournament at the Gulshan Youth Club ground yesterday. Shaon and Birol scored the goals for the winners. Birol was named man-of-the-match.

In the second match, Team Brazil of East West University beat team Argentina of Independent University of Bangladesh 4-1, thanks to strike from Rofik, Rifat, Farhan and Naved. Earlier, Laurent Therond, managing director of Nestle Bangladesh Limited inaugurated the tournament.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Action from yesterday's 'Nescafe 3 in 1 Battle of the Giants' football tournament match between East West University (Brazil) and Independent University Bangladesh (Argentina) at the Gulshan Youth Club ground.