



Strauss taking Tigers lightly

AFP, Nottingham

England captain Andrew Strauss is adamant there is no danger of his side taking Bangladesh lightly in the first of three one-day internationals at Trent Bridge here on Thursday.

The Tigers have never beaten England in any match, across all formats.

England come into these matches on the back of 3-2 one-day series win over world champions Australia, having beaten Bangladesh convincingly in two Tests earlier in the English season.

Strauss, speaking to reporters at Trent Bridge here on Wednesday, said: "We've won four out of six one-dayers [this season] and we're very keen to win these three."

"They're a dangerous side, they all play shots, and Tamim Iqbal in particular is very dangerous."

"In Bangladesh [in March] we had to labour to win the one-day series and we're going to have to work hard and make sure we don't give them any inroads into the game."

"I don't think we're a good enough team just to turn up and win."

"We want to take things forward from our Australia win. There's no room for complacency on our part."

Mashrafe expects more

First ODI against England today



AFP, Nottingham

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza is confident his side will provide more of a challenge to England in their upcoming three one-dayers than they did in last month's Test series.

The Tigers face England in the first one-day international at Trent Bridge here on Thursday having been well beaten 2-0 by their hosts in a Test series that ended with an innings and 80 run rout inside three days at Old Trafford.

Bangladesh then lost all three of their matches at the subsequent Asia Cup one-day tournament in Sri Lanka.

But some of the Tigers' best results in their decade of top-flight international cricket have come in the one-day game, notably when they beat world champions Australia at Cardiff in 2005.

However, they have never beaten England in any format and the hosts come into Thursday's match on the back of a 3-2 one-day series win over Australia.

Mashrafe, appointed captain for this series after Shakib Al Hasan was dumped from the post, told reporters at Trent Bridge here on Wednesday: "It isn't going to be easy against England. We have to play good cricket, hopefully we can do it and perform well this time."

"We are trying to play good cricket starting from the first match, that is our first ambition," the pace bowler added.

"England beat Australia in the first three matches so it is not going to be easy to win...we will concentrate on our own cricket, that is the

main thing.

"I think we are a better team in one-day cricket than in Test cricket and I think this game suits us," the 26-year-old pace bowler explained.

"A few of the batsman are in good form and hopefully a few other guys can join in."

England will be without injured star batsman Kevin Pietersen, who they were planning to rest in any event although a series against Bangladesh might have been the ideal chance for the South Africa born shotmaker to end a sequence of 16 ODI innings without a fifty.

But Mashrafe insisted Bangladesh took no comfort from Pietersen's absence.

"Playing against Pietersen is a great experience for us. When KP plays we feel we can learn so many things from him, so it's not good for us that he is injured."

Mashrafe was due to captain Bangladesh away to a weakened West Indies last year but was ruled out early on through a knee injury, with Shakib leading the side instead to victories in both Test and one-day campaigns.

"I am glad to be back," Mashrafe said. "Playing in England is always very exciting, there are a lot of Bangladeshis here who will hopefully come and support us."

Tamim Iqbal was the standout Bangladesh performer in the Test series, with the left-handed opener scoring centuries at both Lord's and Old Trafford.

"Tamim is definitely the guy who can change the game for us," Mashrafe said. "We are looking for him [to perform] but not just him; Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur, Jahurul Islam too. There are a few guys who can do good things and hopefully they will."

Robben wants new signings

INTERNET

Bayern Munich need to further strengthen their team if they want to challenge for the Champions League title, their Dutch star winger Arjen Robben said.

Robben told Wednesday's edition of the Sport Bild weekly that new hirings would also lead to more healthy competition within the team.

"It is important for Bayern to raise the quality of the squad with new players, and to increase the competition within the team," said Robben, who is in the World Cup final in South Africa with the Dutch.

Munich won another German league and cup double two months ago but missed a historic treble when they were beaten by Inter Milan in the Champions League final.

Bayern have so far not made major hirings for the new season, but young Germany midfielder Toni Kroos is back from a loan-spell at Bayer Leverkusen.

Robben suggested that Munich could have beaten Inter if they had also hired compatriot Wesley Sneijder last year. Both Dutch players were no longer wanted by Real Madrid in 2009, with Robben going to Munich and Sneijder to Inter.

Brilliant goals define Dutch win

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

As far as semifinals go the Netherlands and Uruguay served up a somewhat tepid affair that was lit up by a few moments of absolute brilliance. Goals from their two stars Wesley Sneijder and Arjen Robben and an absolute scorcher from Gio van Bronckhorst meant that the Dutch advanced to their first final in 32 years. Uruguay went home after a sterling tournament and a somewhat easy run

until Gio van Bronckhorst produced an uncharacteristic moment of absolute brilliance.

Van Bronckhorst's 35-yard drive from the right-hand side of the box arrowed into the top corner leaving Muslera no chance. It was a richly deserved reward for a veteran who is probably playing his last tournament.

But the tragic hero of this World Cup is Diego Forlan. The Atletico Madrid striker has been nothing short of inspirational for his side and he yet again proved the catalyst for an unlikely reply; his left foot rocket misread by Maarten Stekelenburg.

The Dutch however made a tactical tweak bringing on Van der Vaart for de Zeeuw. With more attack-minded players on the pitch, the game swung in favour of the Europeans and it was little surprise when Sneijder of all people, deflected a shot beyond Muslera's dive.

And in a game of rare moments, Robben scored to the semis, but they will have done their chances of future success no harm with their performance here. More importantly, it means that the World Cup will definitely stay in Europe and it will also mark the first time that a European side will lift the World Cup in a continent other than their own.

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with a fine header to almost ensure the victory. Uruguay's late pressure paid off with a consolation goal and although they threatened briefly, time was not on their side.

This was a game decided by very fine margins, and despite Netherlands winning the game following a half-time change in formation, it's difficult to attribute too much of their success to tactics. But credit should still be given to van Marwijk for pulling off a bold attacking move.

Oscar Tabarez must rue the fact he had injuries and suspensions to cope with, limiting his tactical options. It was a slight surprise that he didn't reshape his side after van der Vaart's introduction, especially as his philosophy so far has been to adapt from game to game according to his opponents, but then Uruguay were on top before the goal went in. Tabarez has proved himself to be an astute tactician at this competition, and a run to the semifinals should be considered a success.

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Abahani winning

SPORTS REPORTER

Title contenders Abahani maintained their winning streak in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League as they handed a 4-2 defeat to Sonali Bank SC at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday.

Abahani, studded with Pakistani players, went ahead in the very second minute through a field goal from Pakistani Mohammad Javed while local Ajit Kumar doubled the advantage in the ninth minute. Iqbal Nader Prince reduced the margin for Sonali in the first half.

After resumption Pakistani Iarik Aziz and Sohail Abbas struck one goal each to ensure Abahani's eighth victory in as many matches. However, Sonali's Rana Jubair pulled another goal back in between Abahani's third and fourth goals.

T&T Club move up

SPORTS REPORTER

T&T Club leapfrogged to the fourth position in the Bashundhara Senior Division Football League with a 2-0 win over bottom-side Purbachal Parishad at the Birsreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

Ismail put T&T ahead in the 17th minute while Arman sealed the game in the 69th minute.

T&T Club with 12 points from nine matches share the fourth place along with Sunrise SC, Wanderers and Wari Club while Purbachal remain at bottom with five points from nine matches.

Dutch want

FROM PAGE 17

Robben has also been in sparkling form since returning from injury at the end of the group stages.

The duo will be crucial if the Netherlands are to go one better than Cruyff and claim the first world title for one of football's most-deserving nations.

Ballack quiet

FROM PAGE 17

Neither coach Joachim Loew nor team manager Oliver Bierhoff have condemned Lahm's statements, although Bierhoff named them "untimely" ahead of the semifinal with Spain set for later Wednesday.

German football icon Franz Beckenbauer said in his Wednesday column for the Bild daily that it was "irrelevant" whether Ballack was captain or not and that he was still needed on the team - if he is 100 per cent fit.



Pakistan win T20s 2-0

AFP, Birmingham

Teenage quick Mohammad Aamer took three wickets as Pakistan beat Australia by 11 runs in the second Twenty20 international at Edgbaston here on Tuesday to complete a 2-0 series win.

Australia, chasing 163 to win, were dismissed for 151 with 18-year-old left-armed Aamer taking three wickets for 27 runs in his maximum four overs -- exactly the same impressive figures he finished with during Pakistan's 23-run win here on Monday.

The man-of-the-match struck early to remove openers David Warner and Michael Clarke before having Mitchell Johnson lbw late on to the delight of another overwhelmingly pro-Pakistan crowd.

Earlier Australia's bowlers had done a good job in holding Pakistan to 162 for nine with left-arm quick Dirk Nannes striking twice in two balls to remove dangermen Umar Akmal and Shahid Afridi.

Nannes finished with three for 30 while left-arm spinner Stephen O'Keefe, on his international debut, took three for 29 including two tail-end wickets.

PHOTO: REUTERS
Pakistan pacesman Mohammad Aamer leaps in the air as he celebrates the dismissal of Michael Clarke (R) of Australia during the second MCC Spirit of Cricket Twenty20 international at Edgbaston in Birmingham on Tuesday.

Diego's statue proposed

AFP, Buenos Aires

An Argentine lawmaker on Wednesday suggested erecting a statue to football coach Diego Maradona in the capital Buenos Aires as he sponsored a bill to honour one of the country's most famous sons.

Maradona, who will be 50 later this year, still has great public cachet in his homeland despite Argentina crashing out of the World Cup in the quarterfinals to Germany, who beat his side 4-0.

But lower house member Juan Cabandie, an ally of President Cristina Kirchner, said he would back a bill for a statue because "the Argentine people have shown that, where Maradona is concerned, results are not important."

"Maradona has become an icon of Argentine popular culture, he is a social phenomenon and his popularity goes beyond the sporting arena."

Cabandie said a monument would highlight Maradona's strength of character and loyalty to his country's cause as "he continues to write chapters of a story which seems to be without end."

Maradona already has a three-metre-high statue to him weighing some 300 kilos at the Boca Juniors Bombonera stadium where he first made his name.

Despite the loss to Germany Maradona's men received a warm welcome home after impressing up to that stage -- having endured a very mixed qualifying campaign.

Although he is said to be very down over the defeat and has been keeping a low profile in his Buenos Aires home he may yet stay in the post he took in late 2008.

Some observers believe he may be unable to resist leading the country to a home triumph next year in the Copa America.

Earlier, the Argentine Football Association said it had not been in touch as yet with Maradona over his future having indicated it will let him make a decision.

Maradona remains an idol in Argentina having propelled them to the 1986 World Cup with a series of electrifying performances and he also played in the team which came runners-up to Germany in 1990.

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Yet their early World Cup finals campaign was strong with three group stage wins over Nigeria, South Korea and Greece followed by a win over Mexico before the Germans swamped them.

Showdown between airline alliances

REUTERS, Amsterdam/paris

Dutch airline KLM scrambled to put on extra planes to South Africa on Wednesday after the Netherlands reached the World Cup final, as airline alliance bosses limbered up for their own superjumbo clash.

Spain and Germany will battle for the other final place on Wednesday and the result could mean a multi-million-dollar windfall for airlines as thousands of extra fans flock to Johannesburg's Soccer City in the hope of finding tickets.

Tuesday's victory over Uruguay put Netherlands in the July 11 final for the first time since 1978, provoking a clamour from people desperate to join an army of orange-clad Dutch fans.

KLM's website was quoting 4,000 euros for an economy ticket leaving on Friday and returning on Tuesday, but seats were available for about 1,450 euros with a longer stay.

The closing stages of the competition mirror