

Green's way to beat the boo-boys

West Ham keeper Robert Green has come up with an interesting way to help him beat the boo-boys. Green, whose gaffe gifted Clint Dempsey an equalizing goal in England's opening World Cup draw against the USA, was recently booed at a pre-season friendly match at Ipswich. And as a solution, the stopper suggested that he be booed and insulted by his own teammates - a request to which they duly obliged.



Discarded duo's distant dream

Cricket

BISHWAJIT ROY

It seems that the 2011 World Cup is a distant dream for once leading cricketers like opener Shahriar Nafees and all-rounder Alok Kapali. But things could have been different now if they didn't go off track in a very crucial stage of their career. The focus could have been on them with the mega event coming to the country but the reality is that they are now struggling to revive their international fortunes.

Nothing can be more worthy for a cricketer than playing the World Cup in their own soil but the two talented cricketers are not in a position even to dream of playing in the game's showcase event, because it is not an easy task for them to push the selectors for finding a place for them in the national squad.

True there has been a vacuum in the pipeline so that some out-of-favour cricketer can keep his place in the national side but right at the moment they are not the right ones to be considered for the national team.

Nafees was very much aware of the fact and that's why he has no immediate target with the national team.

"It's a dream for any sportsman to play in the World Cup but I'm realistic. It is not an easy task

for me to find a place in the national team right now. I have to do something extraordinary to draw the attention of the selectors," said the left-handed opener while talking to the reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday where he came with the other cricketers to join a conditioning camp.

"I think still I have enough cricket behind me. So I'm working hard to revive my international career. I want to get my position back in the national side through my performances and I'm very much confident. I may miss the coming World Cup but I still have a chance to play the next one after 2011," he added.

Kapali, another enigma of Bangladesh cricket after Mohammad Ashraful, was however emotional with the World Cup compared to Nafees' realistic approach. "I played the 2003 World Cup but missed the 2007 one. This time we are hosting the World Cup, so it's like a dream to play for the country. I still believe this is possible for me to play the World Cup but for that I have to do something special," said Kapali.

"Yes, there is a rumor that I'm not ready to work hard and that's why I missed some opportunities. But the reality is that I was sick at the time but now I'm okay. My first target is to gain fitness and then take every opportunity to get back my place in the national team," he added.



Alok Kapali (L) and Shahriar Nafees (R) stretch those calf muscles ahead of a training session at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. The discarded national players, including Rabiul Islam (C), are part of a 21-man conditioning camp that began under Tigers assistant coach Khaled Mashud.

PHOTO: STAR

Sizzling Sehwag

Cricket

AFP, Colombo

Virender Sehwag hit a typically robust unbeaten 97 off 87 balls to lead India's reply after Thilan Samaraweera's century lifted Sri Lanka to 425 in the third and final cricket Test on Wednesday.

Sehwag, who made 109 in the first Test and 99 in the second, continued his brilliant form to lift India to 180-2 by stumps on an absorbing third day at the P Sara Oval.

Sachin Tendulkar, the world's leading run-getter, marked his record 169th Test appearance with an unbeaten 40 in an unbroken 88-run third wicket stand with Sehwag.

Top-ranked India, seeking a series-leveling victory after losing the first Test, resume on the third day 245 runs behind with eight wickets in hand.

Sri Lanka's first innings prospered through Samaraweera's 12th century before the hosts were all out midway

through the post-lunch session.

Samaraweera, a 33-year-old veteran of 60 Tests, remained unbeaten on 137 after reaching his hundred in the last over before lunch, courtesy of an over-throw that fetched the batsman five runs.

Sehwag ensured India did not lag behind as he launched a spectacular assault on the Sri Lankan bowling with 17 hits to the fence.

The swashbuckling opener, playing his 79th match, became the sixth Indian batsman to complete 7,000 Test runs when he reached 70 with a single off Lasith Malinga.

More than 4,000 of those runs had come in fours, having hit his 1,000th boundary earlier in the innings.

Murali Vijay contributed 14 in an opening stand of 49 with Sehwag when he mistimed a drive off Malinga and gave Ajantha Mendis an easy catch in the covers.

Rahul Dravid made 23 when he was trapped leg-before in Angelo Mathews' first over to reduce India to 92-2, but

Tendulkar and Sehwag settled in to deny Sri Lanka further success.

The pair played both pace and spin comfortably, with Tendulkar matching Sehwag's strokeplay with five well-timed boundaries.

Earlier, the overnight pair of Samaraweera and Mathews batted for an hour to take their fifth-wicket partnership to 89 runs, when India finally broke through.

Mathews, who made 45, was trapped leg-before by Pragyan Ojha, giving the Hyderabad left-arm spinner his third wicket in the innings.

Ojha struck again six overs later when Prasanna Jayawardene, who made nine, missed an attempted sweep and was caught plumb in front of the wicket.

Sri Lanka, who went to lunch on 369-6, lost two quick wickets after resumption.

Suraj Randiv top-edged a sweep off Sehwag, while leg-spinner Amit Mishra held a return catch from Malinga to claim his first wicket after 37 overs which cost 130 runs.

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Indoor now at Abahani's disposal

SPORTS REPORTER

The seven-year long darkness at the Abahani indoors is set to come to an end when it becomes part of the Sheikh Kamal Sporting Complex.

The National Sports Council (NSC) in its meeting on July 22 has decided to hand over the Abahani indoor to the club authorities.

According to sources, the indoor facility will be part of the proposed sporting complex to be built at the Dhanmondi field in the near future.

The original master plan of the complex did not include the squat indoor building, which has been lying useless for the past seven years due to a tug-of-war between NSC and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB).

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Sr Divison football

SPORTS REPORTER

Jatrabari KC held Victoria SC to a goalless draw in the Super League of the Bashundhara Metropolis Senior Division Football at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

In the relegation match, Dhaka Wanderers Club played out a 1-1 draw against Badda Jagarani Sangsad at the same venue.

Jewel put Badda ahead in the very third minute only to be canceled by a 23-minute strike from Shahadat.

Yusuf flies to London today

AFP, Karachi

Recalled Pakistan batsman Mohammad Yousuf flies to London Thursday to join his embattled team ahead of the second Test against England, which starts in Birmingham a day later.

Yousuf, who turns 37 later this month, was recalled from retirement on Sunday, hours after Pakistan's crushing 354-run defeat in the first Test at Nottingham, giving England a 1-0 lead in the four-match series.

The veteran batsman had been banned for an indefinite period in March following Pakistan's disastrous tour of Australia, where the team lost all three Tests, five one-day and a Twenty20 international.

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Lightweights place 12-point demand

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

Having placed a 12-point demand yesterday, seven clubs of the Bangladesh League urged Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) president Kazi Salahuddin to take initiatives to fulfill their demands or face the boycott of the upcoming players transfer window in September.

The letter signed by officials of Brothers Union, Farashganj SC, Rahmatganj MFS, Arambagh KS, Chittagong Mohammedan, Chittagong Abahani and Feni Soccer Club pleaded with the BFF to defer the announced September 1-20 players' transfer by two months and start it in November, following discussion with the club representatives.

It is worth noting however, that the five big clubs; Abahani, Mohammedan SC, Sheikh Russel, Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Muktijoddha Sangsad KC have refrained from making any demands.

The letter stated: "The clubs have been going through financial trouble following the third edition of the Bangladesh League, which took 10 months to be completed instead of five. Consequently the clubs had to pay more money to the foreign players as well as spent additional money to run football camps.

"Despite having known the extent of the financial status facing the clubs, the football federation hurriedly announced the players transfer for the 2010 season without announcing the annual calendar. Hence, the clubs are now in the dark about when the league will start and finish. The clubs therefore appeal to the BFF to announce the annual calendar before the announcement of transfer."

It is mentioned that the players' transfer of the last season also took place in the same period in line with the calendar that the BFF revealed.

The clubs also demanded to begin the second-tier Bangladesh League alongside the upcoming fourth edition of the Bangladesh League and

to ensure the Bangabandhu National Stadium for the league. They also made a prayer for a six-week preparation time following the competition of transfers.

The game's governing body has already completed three editions of the professional league, but has yet been unable to roll out the second-tier Bangladesh League.

So far the fact is that the BNS would not be free for football until the ICC World Cup opening ceremony on February 17 next.

They have demanded to make playable grounds outside the capital and improve the venue management as well as reconstruct the Bangladesh League committee ensuring representatives of the clubs.

The clubs also urged the BFF to pay the dues of last season and to disburse advance appearance fees for the upcoming league. The BFF has so far cleared most of last season's payment. The BFF usually pays during the league.

BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, however, said that they were determined to open the players transfer window and roll the league out at the declared time.

Later in an emergency committee meeting of the football federation yesterday, it was decided to announce the calendar of the next two years within mid-October.

"The meeting did not discuss the matter of what the clubs had submitted today (Wednesday), and the BFF are determined to begin the season

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ASIAN GAMES

Training to start August 10

SPORTS REPORTER

The training camp for the Asian Games will get underway on August 10 at different venues in the city as Bangladesh will take part in 14 disciplines in the 16th edition of the Asian meet to be held in Guangzhou, China in November.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Bangladesh Olympic Association's training and development committee after a meeting with general secretaries of participating federations yesterday.

The meeting has selected some 250 players, coaches and officials who will take part in the training camps that will continue till November.

The meeting also discussed the players' accommodation, food, training venues and equipments and stressed the need of recruiting foreign coaches and sending players abroad for higher training ahead of the games.

The venues include Bangabandhu National Stadium, BKSP, Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium, National Shooting Complex, National Swimming Complex, Sultana Kamal Women Sports Complex, Mohammad Ali Boxing Stadium, Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, National Sports Council Gymnasium, Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium and Kurmitola Golf Club.



PHOTO: AFP

India opener Virender Sehwag follows through on a back-foot punch during his blistering 97 off 87 balls on the second day of the third and final Test against Sri Lanka at the P Sara Oval in Colombo yesterday. When he reached 70, the right-hander completed 7,000 Test runs.

SPORTS POLL
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ANDREW FLINTOFF

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