

Simao calls time on int'l career

Atletico Madrid winger Simao on Friday announced his retirement from international football with Portugal...



Chelsea keep on winning

Chelsea maintained their superb start to the season with a 2-0 win over Stoke on Saturday that kept the Premier League champions on top of the table...

Match heading for a draw

Rain again thwarted Worcestershire's County Championship Division Two match against Northamptonshire on the fourth and final day at the County Ground in Northampton yesterday.

Play remained suspended after tea when the report was last filed. The visitors were 182 for six in their second innings with Shakib Al Hasan (9 not out) and Ben Cox (10 not out) at the crease.

Shakib's side were batting in the second innings courtesy of a plan to spice up the game by both teams. After Northamptonshire declared their first innings at 385-9, Worcestershire called a close to their first innings when they reached 45 for no loss early on the fourth day.

The home side then abandoned their entire second innings to set up Worcestershire a victory target of 341 runs in the

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PHOTO: AFP

Sri Lanka opener Tillakaratne Dilshan runs for joy after reaching a century in the final of the Micromax Cup against India at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium yesterday. Dilshan scored 110 as Sri Lanka raced to a formidable total of 299 for eight.

Dilshan does it for Lanka

Tillakaratne Dilshan cracked an impressive century to set up Sri Lanka's 74-run victory over India in the triangular Micromax Cup one-day series final on Saturday...

India needed a big partnership to achieve the stiff target, but the highest stand was of just 50 runs for the third wicket between Virat Kohli and Yuvraj Singh.

Kohli (37), Suresh Raina (29), Virender Sehwag (28) and Yuvraj (26) got starts, but failed to convert them into big knocks.

India suffered a big setback when in-form opener Sehwag was run out, failing to beat a Chamara Kapugedera direct-hit at the striker's end after hitting six fours in his 22-ball knock.

Dhoni was the last man out, but hardly received support from the other end as Sri Lanka's bowlers kept striking at regular intervals. Paceman Perera and off-spinner Suraj Randiv took three wicket apiece while fast bowler Lasith Malinga, who turned 27 on Saturday, finished with two wickets.

"We just didn't spend enough time in the middle," said Dhoni. "Credit goes to Sri Lanka as they batted and bowled well. Our bowlers gave them a bit of width and that's one thing you don't want to give Dilshan. He smashed us all

around the park." Sangakkara earlier built on man-of-the-match Dilshan's effort with an attractive 62-ball 71, which included one six and seven fours. His brisk knock saw the hosts plunder 80 runs in the last 10 overs.

Dilshan, 33, dominated the Indian attack with exciting strokeplay to put his team on course for a big total, adding 121 for the opening wicket with makeshift opener Jayawardene (39).

Jayawardene also became the third Sri Lankan after Sanath Jayasuriya and Aravinda de Silva to complete 9,000 runs in one-day internationals during his 67-ball knock.

Dilshan was more aggressive than Jayawardene, hoisting paceman Ishant Sharma over long-on for a six and hitting a four off the next delivery. He reached his half-century when he cut left-arm seamer Ashish Nehra for a four.

Although Sri Lanka lost Jayawardene and Upul Tharanga (six) in the space of 11 runs, they continued to maintain an impressive run-rate, thanks to Dilshan's aggressive knock.

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Transfer window now in October

Football

SPORTS REPORTER

The players' transfer for this season's Bangladesh League has been delayed to the first week of October.

In an emergency executive committee meeting of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) yesterday, it was decided to shift the transfer date to October 1 to 7, from the original date of September 1 to 20.

In some other developments, the contract of Robert Rubcic for the job of national team coach has been approved and the signing with the 46-year-old Croatian will be done through the internet.

It is also expected that Rubcic will join the players early next month.

The committee also confirmed that the calendar for the upcoming season will be announced in the first few days of September, and it will have as many as 45 tournaments, including age-group tournaments.

However, the focal point of the meeting was the change in the transfer date.

The change took place after seven clubs -- Brothers Union, Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society, Farashganj Sporting Club, Arambagh Krira Sangha, Chittagong Mohammedan, Chittagong Abahani, Feni Soccer Club and Sheikh Russel -- made the demand to the BFF league committee.

The clubs had pleaded with the BFF to defer the transfer by two months and start it in November, following discussion with the club

representatives. They first sent the letter to BFF president Kazi Salahuddin who asked the clubs to give it to the league committee and having discussed the contents of the letter, the committee referred it to the executive committee meeting.

The plea made by the clubs was deemed 'realistic' because the clubs would find it difficult to make payments as the initial transfer window fell in the middle of the Eid Ul Fitr holidays.

"The clubs made the demand and we think it is realistic, as the last ten days of the transfer window (September 1-20) will clash with the Eid holidays," said BFF general secretary Al Musabbir Sadi.

In the first letter, the clubs claimed that they "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 spend 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."

The transfer window for the foreign players however has remained between September 1 and October 15.

Broad all over Pakistan

Tourists follow on after bowled for 74

Cricket

AFP, London

Pakistan collapsed spectacularly yet again this series as England closed in on an innings victory in the fourth and final Test at Lord's on Saturday.

Pakistan, following-on, were 41 for four in their second innings when rain forced an early close on the third day, having been made to follow-on after they were dismissed for just 74 first time around.

That left them still 331 runs adrift of England's first innings 446 as the home team eyed a victory that would give them a 3-1 win in their last series before begin the defence of the Ashes in Australia in November.

Pakistan's three lowest totals against England have all been made during this series. They were skittled out for 80 in a 354-run first Test loss at Trent Bridge and dismissed for 72 in a nine-wicket second Test defeat at Edgbaston.

It appeared the damage at Lord's was done as much as anything by a world record eighth-wicket stand of 332 between Jonathan Trott (184) and Stuart Broad (169) which rescued England from the depths of 102 for seven.

Pakistan were playing their sixth Test in England in seven weeks, having previously drawn a two-match series against Australia 1-1, and there were signs that punishing schedule had finally caught up with them.

They lost seven wickets for 28 runs after tea on Saturday with off-spinner Graeme Swann taking four for 12 in six overs and fast bowler Steven Finn three for 13 in five.

Pakistan captain Salman Butt top-scored with 26 in an innings where only three batsmen made it into double figures.

Before tea, Broad followed up his maiden first-class century by bowling star batsman Mohammad Yousuf for nought with a superb outswinger.

England captain Andrew Strauss enforced the follow-on with Pakistan -- 372 behind on first innings -- soon in further trouble at nine for two.

Broad's memorable match continued when Imran Farhat mishooked a bouncer to Alastair Cook at mid-on.

Yasir Hameed was then lbw to a full-length James Anderson inswinger before Butt was lbw for 21 to Swann's arm ball.

And just before a downpour forced the players off the field, 41 for three became 41 for four when Yousuf (10) miscued a pull off Finn to Trott at deep square leg.

Earlier, Trott almost became the first player to score two Test double hundreds at Lord's, following his 226 against Bangladesh in May.

His innings of more than nine hours, featuring 19 boundaries, ended when he was caught behind off left-arm seamer Wahab Riaz.

Trott's methodical approach was just what England needed after the rest of the top-order were undone by superb swing bowling, mainly from Mohammad Aamer (six for 84) on Friday.

His partnership with Broad surpassed the previous eighth-wicket Test-best of 313 shared by Wasim Akram (257 not out) and Saqlain Mushtaq (79) for Pakistan against Zimbabwe at Sheikhupura in 1996/97.

England resumed Saturday on 346 for seven with Trott 149 not out and Broad unbeaten on 125.

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Stuart savours ton

Cricket

AFP, London

Stuart Broad couldn't resist having a sly dig at father Chris after his maiden Test century helped turn England's series finale against Pakistan on its head at Lord's on Friday.

England were 47 for five early on the second day and still deep in trouble at 102 for seven when Broad came to the crease, with Pakistan well-placed as they sought a victory that would level the four-match campaign at 2-2.

It looked like Pakistan's 18-year-old left-arm quick Mohammad Aamer, who in the course of taking six for 73 became the youngest bowler to 50 Test wickets, would be the star of the day.

But England recovered to 346 for seven come stumps with Jonathan Trott unbeaten on 149 and No. 9 Broad, primarily a seamer, 125 not out in an England record eighth-wicket stand against Pakistan

so far worth 244.

Former England opener Chris Broad, now an International Cricket Council match referee, made six Test hundreds but they were all overseas and Stuart told reporters: "It's a feeling I'll remember for the rest of my life, and it's nice to be the first Broad up on that honours board."

Broad said he was especially pleased by the way he'd managed his innings.

"In my mind I wanted to play quite freely, because it's doing a bit here, and anyone who tried to hang around was gone so I had a licence to have a look," explained the 24-year-old after reaching three figures for the first time in what is his 32nd Test.

"But I also knew that if we

were 100 all out this Test series was going to be 2-2.

"I wanted to be aggressive and take the attack to the bowlers, but I had to do it in a manner that I didn't give my wicket away cheaply. And I think I managed that."

He also paid tribute to No 3. Trott, whose hundred was his third in 13 Tests, saying: "He was out there for the whole collapse and saw the ball nipping around. That can easily get in a batsman's mind.

"But he played with such clarity and picked up anything that was slightly a bad ball and put it away," added Broad of the South Africa born Trott, who made a century on debut in England's Ashes clinching win at The Oval last year -- where Broad took five for 37.

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Highest eighth wicket partnerships

Table with 6 columns: Partners, Runs, Team, Opposition, Venue, Year. Lists partnerships like Trott & Broad (332) and Akram & Mushtaq (313).



England all-rounder Stuart Broad (L) is being congratulated by teammate Jonathan Trott after the former reached 150-run mark on the third day of the Lord's Test in London yesterday. Broad ended up on 169 while his senior partner amassed 15 more.

PHOTO: AFP