

# ENGLAND V IRELAND: BANGALORE

## Upset or mismatch?

AFP, Bangalore

England captain Andrew Strauss wants his side to build on their thrilling tie with co-hosts India when they face Ireland in a potential banana-skin World Cup clash on Wednesday.

Strauss, who has admitted in the past that England tend to up their game against better teams, saw his side make a sluggish start to the tournament with an unconvincing six-wicket win over the Netherlands.

A rare England highlight in that match was the left-handed opener's 88 and Strauss was again in superb form on Sunday, making a career-best 158 in Bangalore as the visitors finished level with India's score of 338.

"It is the sort of chase that gives you a lot of confidence as a batting group that you can chase down anything and that's important," said Strauss.

But a major concern for England has been the form of senior seam bowler James Anderson, whose 9.5 overs

against India yielded one wicket for 91 runs.

It was the most expensive World Cup analysis by any England bowler, surpassing Derek Pringle's 0-83 against the West Indies at Gujranwala in 1987.

"Opening the bowling out here is hard work, and bowling most of your overs in Powerplay is not easy," Strauss said of Anderson, who also bowled 10 wicketless overs against the Dutch for 72 runs.

"Jimmy's got a lot of skills. Anyone who writes a guy of that quality off is pretty naive."

England expect to have Anderson's fellow fast bowler Stuart Broad avail-

able again after he missed the India match through illness and his reverse-swing could prove useful on a ground boasting excellent pitches for batsmen.

Ian Bell, who made 69 against India and shared a third-wicket stand of 170 with Strauss, believes England are finding their feet nicely in the subcontinent.

"It really has kicked everything into gear," Bell said. "It's another improved performance from the Netherlands and we can move on now to the next game against Ireland and put in a better performance."

Ireland, who tied with Zimbabwe and defeated Pakistan at the 2007 World Cup, missed out on the chance to cause fresh embarrassment to a Test nation in their opening match, going down to a 27-run loss to Bangladesh despite restricting the co-hosts to a modest 205.

They have several county players in their side and Bell, who has played alongside seamer Boyd Rankin at Warwickshire, said: "These days a lot of those guys are respected on the county circuit."

ENGLAND V IRELAND	
Matches:	3
England win:	3
Ireland win:	0
No result:	0
First meeting:	June 13, 2006, Dublin -- England won by 38 runs
Last meeting:	August 27, 2009, Dublin -- England



TEACH ME HOW TO BAT: England paceman Stuart Broad (L) is in conversation with his captain Andrew Strauss at the Chinnaswamy Stadium where the left-hander scored a magnificent 158 against India in a World Cup match that ended in a tie on Sunday.

# Mithun treble fires Muktijoddha

SPORTS REPORTER

Mithun Chowdhury slammed the first hat-trick of the season to lift Muktijoddha Sangsad to the top of the Grameenphone Bangladesh League with a 5-0 drubbing of Farashganj SC at the Bishreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium yesterday.

The hat-trick takes the diminutive striker to the top of the goalscorer's chart with 9 goals, two ahead of Abahani's Twum Frank who had a brief stay at the top of the chart with seven goals to his name. Like their striker Twum, Abahani too were overtaken at the top by two points by Muktijoddha who now have 22 points from nine outings. The other two goals of the match were scored by their Sudanese

striker James Moga.

Mithun gave Muktijoddha the lead in the tenth minute before doubling the margin eleven minutes later in what would become a lopsided affair.

Moga scored the third just before the break to go for breather with a healthy 3-0 lead. The second half proceeded in much the same fashion as Mithun completed his hat-trick in the 71st minute before Moga scored his second in the 81st to complete the rout.

Elsewhere at the Cox's Bazar Stadium, hosts Chittagong Mohammedan earned three valuable points with a 1-0 victory over Brothers Union. The decider was scored in the 45th minute by Khaled.

The result leaves both teams in the middle of the table with 10 points each.



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN: Muktijoddha striker Mithun leaves a host of Farashganj defenders in his wake during a Bangladesh League match at the Bishreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday. Mithun scored a hat-trick in the Red's 5-0 win.

## Shave or Dye

AFP, Bangalore

Ireland World Cup captain William Porterfield dyed his hair a lurid purple on Tuesday as part of a cancer awareness campaign.

Porterfield and several teammates had their hair dyed either purple or blonde while other players had their heads shaved.

"You're not imagining things," said Porterfield, whose side tackle England here on Wednesday.

"The Irish Cancer Society laid on the Shave or Dye campaign for cancer so we're raising awareness. There's a website set up and anything we can do will help the cause. There's a lot of people affected by it."

"Five have dyed hair and there's a good few that have shaved. Boyd Rankin's got his own dye and Kevin O'Brien's a bit similar to my own. There's a bit of blonde as well."

Coach Phil Simmons, the former West Indies Test player, went for a double by having his head shaved and his beard dyed.

## Samuels turned down WI offer

AFP, New Delhi

West Indies batsman Marlon Samuels, who served a two-year ban due to alleged links with an Indian bookmaker, said Tuesday he turned down a chance to return to the subcontinent for the World Cup.

The 30-year-old said he was approached by selectors to replace Dwayne Bravo after the all-rounder withdrew with a knee injury, but opted instead to stay at home and work on his domestic form.

"First of all, I want to say thanks to the regional selectors for sitting down and thinking about selecting me for the World Cup. I am honoured to get such a phone call," Samuels told the Jamaica Gleaner newspaper.

"But as I had said in interviews before the start of the tournament, I want to focus on four-day and not one-day cricket, and try to be out there in the sun for hours on top of hours. I am doing that at the moment."

"I still don't think I am 100 per cent ready and I want to be honest with myself. I hope the selectors understand and respect my decision."

Samuels played 29 Tests and 103 one-day internationals before serving a two-year ban.



Ireland wicketkeeper batsman Niall O'Brien will be the key for the ICC Associate Member nation's hopes of an upset against England when the two sides clash in a World Cup Group B match in Bangalore today.

PHOTO: AFP

# Stands up & delivers

AFP, Bangalore

From bit-part player to Ashes winner and now the mainstay of England's World Cup seam attack, Tim Bresnan has enjoyed an impressive few months in international cricket.

But the one thing the Yorkshire all-rounder has never lacked is self-belief.

It was on show again during England's thrilling World Cup tie with India when Bresnan removed the dangerous Virender Sehwag and cleaned up the tail to finish with career-best figures of five for 48.

In doing so he prevented the co-hosts, who made 338, finishing with a score of more than 350.

With James Anderson struggling -- the Lancashire swing bowler's 9.5 overs against India cost 91 runs -- and Stuart Broad missing Sunday's match through illness, England badly needed Bresnan to deliver with the ball.

But as he told reporters at the Chinnaswamy Stadium, where England return to play Ireland on Wednesday, it was all just a matter of time.

"As I said 18 months ago, who knows where I can be when I've reached a level I'm happy with?"

"Experience, hard work -- any of those things," he replied when asked for a reason for the surge in form that started when he

was drafted into England's side for the fourth Test against Australia in Melbourne.

In that match he helped restrict Australia to just 98 in their first innings and took 4-50 in the second as the visitors retained the Ashes.

"I think I'm still improving as a cricketer and as a bowler and certainly still as a batter," Bresnan said.

Bresnan is quicker than he looks and for all his trademark Yorkshire bluster, the seamer -- who turned 26 on Monday -- is a thoughtful bowler.

Asked what his gameplan had been against India, he jokingly replied: "I tried to get lots of wickets."

"It wasn't swinging a great deal up top and it's not really moving off the seam, so it's quite difficult to take wickets without using variations," he said.

"So you have to try to mix it up as much as you can and create pressure and take wickets that way," he added.

"Basically you've just got to work out the conditions, what the pitch is doing. Is it slow, quick, can you get away with bowling short?" he said.

"The Powerplay's a lot more difficult than at the death, because you can only have three fielders outside the circle."

"It's a nightmare but it can be attacking as well, it just depends who you've got batting and what you are trying to achieve."

## SPORTS POLL

WEEKLY QUESTION

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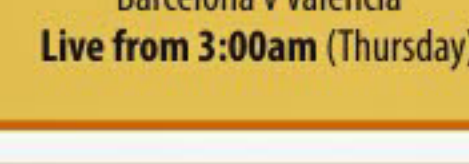


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TEN Action+

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Live from 3:00am (Thursday)



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