

Hoping high on wheelchair

DAVID WEIR



In just under a year from now the 2012 Paralympics will begin in London. And I'm confident that the UK will put on the most amazing show.

London 2012 will be my fourth Paralympics but the most special by far as someone born and raised in South London.

I caught the racing bug when I was really young competing in wheelchair races from the age of 8. I started off representing my school, then my area of London and then I raced in the London mini-marathon.

The Paralympic Games returns to its spiritual home in 2012, as the UK was the birthplace of the Paralympic movement. In 1948 Doctor Ludwig Guttmann organised a sports competition for a group of wounded British war veterans at Stoke Mandeville hospital.

We're using the 2012 Paralympic Games as an opportunity to encourage more disabled people to take part in sport.

since Beijing I have been mentoring a number of young racers hoping some will break through and become future Paralympians.

2012 presents a huge opportunity for disability sport and the Paralympic movement. The television coverage alone will help project the sport around the world and really help raise its profile.

The 2012 Games will be a great platform to demonstrate what the UK has achieved for disabled people on and off the track.

will inspire other countries to improve the lives of their disabled citizens.

The Olympic Park is a fantastic sporting site. Anyone who has visited it cannot fail to be impressed. It has been designed very much with the athletes and accessibility in mind.

I can't describe what competing in 2012 in front of a home crowd will mean. I raced with a Chinese athlete in Beijing and the volume in the stadium with his home fans chanting was overwhelming.

The UK will take the Paralympics to another level in 2012. It'll be the biggest Games yet in terms of competitors, audience and profile. I want to use this opportunity to encourage people around the world to be part of the 2012 Paralympic experience.

The author is a leading British wheelchair racer. He won the 2011 Virgin London Wheelchair Marathon, which was a record fifth title at the event. He won 2 gold medals, 1 silver and 1 bronze medal at the Paralympic Games in Beijing in 2008 and 3 Gold medals at the IPC World Championships earlier this year in Christchurch, New Zealand.

SLC defends Galle wicket

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's cricket chief insisted Wednesday there was nothing wrong with the controversial wicket used in the first Test against Australia in Galle, saying no one got hurt.

"In my opinion, the pitch was not dangerous. Nobody got hurt," Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) chairman Upali Dharmadasa told AFP.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) this week ordered a probe into the dry, dusty track and asked the SLC for an explanation after match referee Chris Broad described it as a poor pitch.

ICC General Manager (cricket) David Richardson and chief match referee Ranjan Madugalle will consider the evidence, including video footage and Sri Lanka Cricket's submissions, before reaching their decision.

Australia won the Test by 125 runs last week, which saw 40 wickets fall in under four days, 16 of them on the second day.

Dharmadasa brushed aside criticism of the pitch, saying over 800 runs were scored in the match, with Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene making 105 and Australia's Mike Hussey a defiant 95.

I'm an

FROM PAGE 16

international friendly though we had a lot of loopholes because of lack of experience, but I can assure you that everything will be in place next time," said Salahuddin.

The BFF boss was lavish in his praise for sponsors Beximco Group and believed that he had earned faith of different corporate houses and hoped they would come forward at the time of need.

Eng again

FROM PAGE 16

The third international in the five-match series takes place at the Oval in London on Friday.

SCORES IN BRIEF

INDIA: 187 for 8 (Patel 28, Rahane 54, Dravid 32, Raina 40, Tiwary 11; Bresnan 3-43, Swann 3-33)

ENGLAND: 188 for 3 (Cook 80 not out; Kieswetter 46, Bell 25; Bopara 24 Ashwin 2-42)

Result: England won by seven wickets.

Done for by injuries

PTI, Southampton

Handed another demoralising defeat by England on a miserable tour, Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni bemoaned the injury-crisis that has hit his side, saying that all his plans fall apart due to the lack of options at his disposal.

India went down by seven wickets in the rain-curtailed second ODI and Dhoni said the bowling left a lot to be desired given that the batsmen had done a decent job by posting 187 in the 23-overs-a-side game.

"The bowling department needs to step up a bit. The strength of our bowlers is not speed but it didn't swing today. Also the variations in pace were not possible because the outfield was wet and the ball came on to the bat nicely," said Dhoni after England comfortably overhauled the 188-run target.

"Presently it is becoming difficult to manoeuvre them around with just two bowlers. When the frontline bowlers go for runs, it becomes difficult. I tried Ashwin hoping he could upset their scoring but even he went for runs. The first five overs didn't work out for us," he added.

"Our fast bowlers are not deceptively quick. They are between the 128-132mph speed. If it is not swinging, it's difficult and a bit tough on them."

Tigers start training for Windies

FROM PAGE 16

for match practice," said Akram.

There had been a lot of criticism about the board's failure to ensure enough match practice for the team before the Zimbabwe tour, with many saying that it was one of the major reasons behind the debacle in Zimbabwe.

And that is why the BCB has been trying to arrange some practice matches against a strong foreign team from the subcontinent but there is a very slim chance that the players will get the opportunity as the BCB did not get any positive response from its Pakistan and Sri Lanka counterparts.

TEAMS

NATIONAL: Imrul Kayes, Tamim Iqbal, Shahriar Nafees, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Shuvogata Hom, Alok Kapali, Nasir Hossain, Abdur Razzak, Mohammad Ashraful, Shafiqul Islam, Sohrawardi Shuvo, Nazmul Hossain and Rubel Hossain.

BANGLADESH A: Junaed Siddiqui, Jahurul Islam, Nadif Chowdhury, Rokibul Hasan, Mahmudullah Riyad, Naeem Islam, Sahagir Hossain, Mohammad Elias, Shahadat Hossain, Forhad Reza, Saqlain Sajib, Shamsur Rahman, Robiul Islam and Syed Rassel.

STAND-BY PLAYERS (FOR BOTH TEAMS): Nazimuddin, Mohammad Mithun, Dhiman Ghosh, Tapash Baishya, Nazmul Hossain, Nur Hossain, Shubashis Roy, Dollar Mahmud, Rony Talukdar and Nasiruddin Faruque.

GP-BCB NATIONAL CRICKET ACADEMY: Fazle Rabbi, Myshukur Rahman, Abdul Majid, Mahmudul Hasan, Mominal Haque, Tasamul Haque, Anamul Haque, Sabbir Rahman, Alauddin Babu, Kamrul Islam, Al Amin, Shohag Gazi, Tanvir Ahmed and Sanjamul Islam.

STAND-BY: Shaker Ahmed, Kamrul Islam, Mukter Ali, Nurul Hasan, Asif Ahmed, Shihab Ahmed, Iftekhar Rahee, Soumya Sarker and Nazmul Hossain.

A question of culpability

FROM PAGE 16

Kamal. If there is an issue with the cliques in the team, then similar questions have to be raised about the current board where grouping is very much visible and stagnating the activities of the existing sub-committee, rendering them incapable of running the show properly.

And because of unhealthy and unprofessional activities within the board it was possible to take the hard line against Shakib and Tamim without any previous warning, reprimanding and imposing fine against them. There has been a question about poor management, and who will take the responsibility for that?

If BCB was honest in their efforts to find out the real reasons behind the debacle, then they must form an independent inquiry committee as the reports from the officials of team management are not good enough and does not provide sufficient grounds for such a harsh decision.

The board needs to take a holistic view into the problems plaguing the current setup before taking any decision regarding the failure in Zimbabwe. Instead, by taking this decision BCB not only killed any chance of addressing the deeper problems but also proved that they were not ready to face the truth.

It's really alarming the way the board is operating and many are already fearful of the prospect of the BCB following the path of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). A fearful prospect indeed!



Sri Lanka cricketer Kumar Sangakkara (L) catches a ball during a practice session at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium yesterday, ahead of the 2nd Test against Australia starting here today.

Washout at New York

AFP, New York

Rain washed out all play at the US Open on Tuesday, leaving defending champion Rafael Nadal and title rival Andy Murray kicking their heels in frustration.

After delaying the start of play, organizers announced that a poor forecast had prompted them to cancel both the day and night sessions for Tuesday, the ninth day of the Grand Slam tournament.

Play was expected to resume on Wednesday morning.

The downpours again looked set to spark more questions over the decision by the Flushing Meadows authorities not to follow the lead of the Australian Open and Wimbledon in building a retractable roof over its main court.

Rain has bedevilled the tournament in recent times with the men's final, scheduled for the last Sunday of the fortnight, carried over to the Monday for the last three years.

Murray had been due to begin proceedings on the Arthur Ashe Stadium against Donald Young of the United States followed by Nadal's clash against Gilles Muller of Luxembourg.

In the day's other men's last 16 matches, Spain's David Ferrer had been scheduled to face former champion Andy Roddick with John Isner tackling Gilles Simon.

Also postponed were the first two women's quarter-finals, which pitted German Angelique Kerber against Italy's Flavia Pennetta and Samantha Stosur of Australia against Russian Vera Zvonareva.

Wanted is a good pitch

Pallekele Test starts today

Cricket

AFP, Pallekele

Australia and Sri Lanka clash in the second cricket Test in Pallekele from Thursday, relieved they will not be playing on a dusty bowl like the one in Galle.

The controversial dry wicket in the first Test last week was described as "poor" by match referee Chris Broad and the International Cricket Council sought an explanation from Sri Lankan authorities.

Australia won the match by 125 runs as 40 wickets fell in four days -- 16 on the second day itself -- with 273 being the highest total in the Test.

Sri Lankan captain Tillakaratne Dilshan and his Australian counterpart Michael Clarke, who had both criticised the Galle wicket, said the one at the Pallekele International Stadium looked a much better surface.

"It's a good Test wicket," said Dilshan. "Batting will be a lot easier and it could turn on the fourth and fifth days."

Clarke, hoping to put his first Test series as Australia's captain beyond Sri Lanka's reach, also seemed happy with the pitch on offer. "It's a lot drier than it was yesterday, but I am sure it will play much better than the one at Galle," said Clarke.

"The wicket is compact, it is hard. It is very important to put up big scores whether you bat first or second. I also think spin will play a big part as the game progresses."

The tourists had announced their playing XI in advance on Tuesday, with Shaun Marsh due to make his debut in place of Ricky Ponting, who returned home after Galle to await the birth of his second child.

The left-hander, son of former Australian opener Geoff Marsh, is not a novice to the big stage, having played in 35 one-day internationals and five Twenty20 games.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, added promising seamer Shaminda Eranga and unorthodox spinner Ajantha Mendis to the 11 that played in Galle in a short-list of 13 announced by Dilshan.

Eranga, 25, who took part in the preceding one-day series, will be awarded a Test cap if left-arm seamer Chanaka Welegedara failed to recover from a knee injury suffered during training on Wednesday.

Mendis looked set to replace off-spinner Suraj Randiv, who claimed 2-76 in the first innings at Galle, but returned wicketless in

the second despite the helpful track. Clarke said he was surprised Mendis did not play in Galle.

"He is a very good bowler with a lot of variations," the Australian captain said. "I will be very happy if he is again left out for this match."

Dilshan said the hosts had overcome the defeat in the first Test and were ready for the challenge ahead.

"This is a new game, a new wicket," the Sri Lankan captain said. "The confidence in the team is high. I am sure we will put up a much better performance here."

Clarke expected Sri Lanka to bounce back strongly in the series.

"I am pretty certain they will be tougher than they were in the first Test," he said. "There are a lot of good players in their team and we will have to be at our best if we want to win again."

The third and final Test of the series, Australia's first in Sri Lanka since 2004, will be played at the Sinhalese sports club in Colombo from September 16.

SQUADS

AUSTRALIA: Michael Clarke (captain), Shane Watson, Philip Hughes, Michael Hussey, Usman Khawaja, Shaun Marsh, Brad Haddin, Mitchell Johnson, Ryan Harris, Trent Copeland, Nathan Lyon. 12th man: Michael Beer.

SRI LANKA (from): Tillakaratne Dilshan (captain), Tharanga Paranavithana, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Thilan Samaraweera, Prasanna Jayawardene, Angelo Mathews, Suraj Randiv, Suranga Lakmal, Chanaka Welegedara, Ajantha Mendis, Rangana Herath, Shaminda Eranga.

Messi, Mikel bids

FROM PAGE 16

Meanwhile, Messi's opposite number Chelsea midfielder John Obi Mikel, had to take some trouble for his flight to London. Mikel went to the airport from where he was supposed to fly to London on a 2am flight, but a mistake from the ticketing agent had him waiting for some hours more. Mikel came back to the hotel and left on a later flight at around 7am, with a few more players.

The rest of the Nigeria squad left by two more instalments, one at 7 pm on Wednesday and the last two hours later. Meanwhile, a hotel source said that the Nigerians were heard grunting among themselves about the lack of support they received from the local fans.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Food list 5 LummoX 8 Glitz partner 12 Shake-speare's river 13 Under the weather 14 Relaxation 15 Corsage flower 17 Karaoke need 18 Tattoo-ist's supply 19 Need for water 21 Released 24 100 (Sp.) 25 Statutes 26 Jon Arbuckle's cat 30 Noshed 31 Fortune-teller's deck 32 Extinct bird 33 Military post 35 Shade of color 36 Not 13-Across 37 Garbage vessel 38 Jungle expedition 41 Intend 42 Tiger Woods' ex 43 Chickpea 48 McNally partner 49 That guy 50 Bank transaction 51 Vicinity 52 Attempt 53 Advantage Solution time: 21 mins.

Grid for crossword puzzle with letters filled in.

Grid for cryptogram puzzle.

CRYPTOQUIP ZR FRO CMHKG N LRJJHXM JQEXRK VREGHKT ROC NC SNKF LHCKQXX WYOAX VROYZ A Q WNYQZ N TFS - ZNKZF? Yesterday's Cryptquip: COMPANY THAT'S FAMOUS FOR DELIVERY OF DENTURES TO HOMES AND OFFICES: UNITED PARTIAL SERVICE. Today's Cryptquip Clue: F equals Y