

Veron nears retirement

Argentine midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron seems ready to retire. Veron has told reporters that an October 31 match against Buenos Aires club Racing will be his last game for Estudiantes. Estudiantes declined to confirm Veron's plans on Thursday. The 36-year-old Veron has also played for Boca Juniors in Argentina, and has played for a number of European clubs. He played for Sampdoria, Parma, Lazio, Inter Milan before departing Italy for England, where he played at Manchester United and Chelsea. Veron has also featured at three World Cups for Argentina—1998, 2002 and 2010.



WI start with big win

SPORTS REPORTER



West Indies were given a ritualistic welcome to the country despite their shortcomings as the BCB XI simply

surrendered in the practice match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The visitors won by 65 runs after going past their own struggles with the bat to score 217 for nine in 45 overs (after being unnecessarily put into bat). Later, their combination of brisk pace and leg-spin gave the home batsmen too much trouble as they rolled over for just 152 in 41 overs.

The visitors' struggle on these wickets against spin and their inability to pace their innings was apparent, though Rampaul's four-wicket haul is a forewarning of things to come, namely fast short-pitched bowling.

The rot began when Junaed Siddiqui fell leg-before to Darren Sammy in the second over of the chase. Immediately afterwards, Mohammad Ashraful and Shahriar Nafees looked comfortable against the West Indies skipper but Ravi Rampaul's back-breaking bounce and Andre Russell's discipline stalled the duo. The pair added 43 for the second wicket with Ashraful scoring the bulk of the runs despite Nafees hogging more of the strike.

Ashraful struck six boundaries in his 29-ball 32 but while his first four boundaries were of class, two others showed his intent, that of needless aggression against the short ball. He succumbed to a dab towards third-man which he tried several times during his short stay.

What followed was another poor reflection of the batsmen's mindset as they couldn't negotiate the short stuff.

After Nafees swept Anthony Martin to

square-leg to end his misery (16 off 51 balls), Shuvogoto Hom Chowdhury, Naeem Islam and Nasir Hossain all fell while trying to play a pull shot.

Alok Kapali's 41 off 54 balls with the help of three boundaries was an innings that would do him the favour of finding a place in the ODI squad that will be announced after the Twenty20 international later this week.

West Indies, earlier in the day, batted on two gears after being put into bat: watchful at the start before going for broke at every opportunity.

Their need for adjustment to the local conditions, the heat especially, was paramount and it was evident at the way the openers Lendl Simmons and Kieran Powell batted. But with the innings going nowhere, Simmons winded up at the first sight of a loose delivery in the seventh over, only to see his ferocious square-cut go straight to Nasir Hossain at point off Robiul Islam. Powell was the first who misread the wicket and went after Naeem's off-spin even after being dropped while playing the same shot as he was dismissed, at the same place.

A 59-run stand between Darren Bravo and Marlon Samuels followed but that too flickered between a very cautious approach and bravado. Bravo eventually missed the half-century by three runs when he too was caught straight down the ground after he hit five sweet boundaries and a six in his 74-ball knock. Samuels' innings ended similarly when he too chipped it right down long-on's throat for 30 while Danza Hyatt's first outing in the sub-continent ended after he struck a four and a straight six in his 19-ball 14.

The next partnership gave the visitors some respectability as Denesh Ramdin and skipper Sammy added 57 for the sixth wicket

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Alok Kapali smacks a boundary during his 41-run knock for BCB XI against visiting West Indies during their limited-overs practice match at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Jurgensen on board as bowling coach

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has appointed Shane Jurgensen as the national team's bowling coach.

The 35-year-old Australian, who has coached for nearly fifteen years at a number of different levels since his first trip to the UK with Horsham Cricket Club at the age of 21, is expected to arrive in Dhaka on Sunday to join the Tigers.

BCB's chief executive officer Manzur Ahmed informed that Jurgensen, a right-arm fast bowler who represented three states at first-class cricket, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia, will continue with the Tigers till June 2013.

"Jurgensen is a vastly experienced bowling specialist. He has also had an accomplished cricket career and his input would be extremely important for our cricketers. We have agreed on a contract which would see him with the Bangladesh team up to June, 2013," said Manzur.

Jurgensen also holds two special achievements. He is the first cricketer in history to take 10 wickets or more in

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Debraj in solo lead

SPORTS REPORTER

FIDE master Debraj Chatterjee took solo lead in the Qualifiers of the Mercantile Bank 37th National Chess Championship at the close of the eighth round at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall room yesterday.

Chatterjee defeated FIDE master Rezaul Haque to earn seven points from eight outings.

Monir Hossain and Sohail Chowdhury followed the leader with 6.5 points each as they drew their board in the eighth round.

Nine players are jointly in third position with six points each. They are FIDE master Khandokar Aminul Islam, FIDE master Abdul Malek, Mahabuddin, Jamaluddin, Shafiq Ahmed, Fazle Nur Bappi, Dewan Mohammad Riyad, Nahid Parvez and Sharif Hossain.

Optimism despite loss

SPORTS REPORTER



At the end of yesterday's 65-run defeat at the hands of the West Indies, Alok

Kapali said that there's a lot of optimism for the Tigers in the series proper, despite a lot of shoddy batting.

In front of a 7,000-strong holiday crowd at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium, Kapali was one of only two performers for the BCB XI. He took two wickets in an economical spell of leg-spin before top-scoring with 41 off 56 balls.

But the Sylhet-born cricketer believed that winning against the West Indies wasn't unattainable.

"We are used to playing in Mirpur. We believe that we play to win. I think we have more chance of winning in that case," was his optimistic summary.

"Most of our spinners didn't play today. Since we did well against their batsmen today, the likes of Shakib [Al

Hasan], [Mahmudullah] Riyad and [Abdur Razzak] Raj would do even better I believe," explained Kapali.

One would definitely agree with his justification. Kapali himself was the best bowler on show, picking off two wickets with his sliders as the tourists floundered between two extremes: caution and ambition.

With the exception of Darren Sammy and Denesh Ramdin, the rest of the youngsters struggled to pace their innings, five of whom gave catches to long-on and long-off to the spinners.

Naeem Islam, Nasir Hossain and Mohammad Ashraful also had fruitful outings with the ball but when one looks at their shot-selection later in the day, Kapali's optimism becomes tenuous.

Apart from Junaed Siddiqui, six of the batsmen are part of the 18-member squad announced for the Twenty20 and ODI series, but none fought to a half-century, let alone dominated the opposition attack.

The handling of the short ball should be Stuart Law's prime concern. None of them looked comfortable whenever the ball was banged in with three batsmen Shuvogoto Hom Chowdhury, Naeem Islam and Nasir Hossain getting out on the pull.

Mohammad Ashraful, meanwhile, made a flourishing start only to give it away although he did look to be struggling around the time of his dismissal.

The stern warning was from the only genuine fast bowler on show Rampaul. He picked up four wickets, but more importantly used the short ball to good effect.

"I try to be aggressive as a fast bowler. The ball was coming on the pitch. I tend to use all my fire on the wicket," said the T&T fast bowler, who agreed that it was a plan of attack for the visitors.

"We know that [weakness against short bowling] as well. If the wicket

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WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Drearier by BU's pull-out

SPORTS REPORTER

Brothers Union became the second team to pull out of the ongoing Women's Football League yesterday after failing to assemble a squad, dealing another blow to the success of the inaugural women's league.

Dhaka Wanderers Club had earlier pulled out of the league from Group B, reducing the number of teams to three. The consequent withdrawal of Brothers from the same group means Mohammedan SC and Farashganj moved into the semifinals after playing a game between them where Mohammedan had defeated Farashganj 12-0.

The first edition of the women's football league was inaugurated on September 28 with question over its viability. The biggest question mark was regarding the controversial pool system as well as groupings of participating eight teams. But the women's league committee could not provide reasonable answer those questions; rather started

the league and is now facing difficulties as

teams are pulling out one after another.

"We have been saying from the start that we would try to form a team even though would be a tough job for us. We have tried, but have failed. So now, we informed the authority concerned on Thursday that we were not going to turn up on Friday," said Brothers Union football manager Amer Khan, explaining the reason for pull-out.

"We are still sweating over forming our men's squad for the Bangladesh League due to lack of quality players. In such a circumstance, it is quite incredible to form a women's team where there are not many available players," said Khan.

In the eight-team league, only Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club and Mohammedan SC formed strong squads comprising regular players while the rest Dipali Jubo Sangha, Arambagh KS, Farashganj SC and Wari Club -- roped in players many of whom never even kicked the ball before.

The gulf between the top two sides and the

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Clarke unfazed by changes

Cricket

CRICINFO, Sydney

Michael Clarke insists he will not let his fledgling Australian captaincy, nor his rejuvenated batting, be compromised by worry over the myriad personnel and procedure issues swirling around the national team ahead of the tour to South Africa.

While Clarke made the ideal start to his time as Test captain by leading the team to a 1-0 series victory in Sri Lanka, something he secured with a rousing century on the final day of the third Test, he is facing further complications on his second tour with a back-room staff every bit as transitional as the team itself.

He takes a squad featuring an interim coach in Troy Cooley plus two possible contenders for the fulltime job in Steve Rixon and Justin Langer. The national selectors are also in a state of flux following the changes wrought by the Argus review, though it is understood that members of the current panel, none of whom will remain once their replacements are named, have agreed to spend time on the ground in South Africa.

Clarke's leadership on the field in Sri Lanka was exemplary, but success in South Africa will not simply be a matter of planning effectively for the Proteas. He will need to find enough space between his on-field duties and those of team organisation even as the ways and means of that organisation are changing.



Mohammed Vali of India plays a backhand return against Abdaal Haider of Pakistan during their singles semifinal match of the ATF U-14 Series Tennis Tournament at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. Vali won the match 6-1, 6-0 to book his final berth while he will also play the doubles' final.

PHOTO: STAR

ATF U-14 TENNIS Bangladeshi pair in doubles' final

SPORTS REPORTER

Rubel Hossain and Mahin Reza Khan of Bangladesh moved into the final of the boys' doubles in the ATF U-14 Series Tennis Tournament beating their Pakistani opponents at the National Tennis Complex in Ramna yesterday. The Bangladeshi pair beat Pakistan's Kaleem Nafi and Haider Abdaal pair 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 to book the only final berth for the host nation. In the final today, they play against Indian-American pair of Vali Mohammed and Moises Escobar who beat Chow Chun Ho and Sou Alan pair of Hong Kong 6-2, 6-3 in the other semi.

However, Bangladesh failed to make it past the semifinals in the girls' doubles as Ishtita Afroz and Ayesha Sultana pair lost to Joyce Leung and Sze Yu Wing pair of Hong Kong in 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 sets. Joyce and Sze Yu will meet Winona IP Wai Lam and Claudia NG Hei of Hong Kong who beat the Malay-Lanka pair of Kaur Delizavernne and Fernando Tasha in 6-3, 4-6, 7-5 sets.

Meanwhile, India's Mohammad Vali and Hong Kong's Winona IP Wai Lam will feature in the boys' and girls' singles final as well apart from the doubles. Vali will meet Alan Sou Ming of Hong Kong in the boys' singles final while Wai Lam will take on Kaur Delizavernne of Malaysia in the girls' singles final.

The boys and girls doubles final will take place at 9:00 am and while the singles final will be played at 2:30 pm.