

Cummins excites White

Aussies touch down in Cape Town

Cricket

AFP, Cape Town

Teenage fast bowler Patrick Cummins has burst on the scene so quickly that Australia Twenty20 captain Cameron White has not yet seen him in action.

"It's pretty exciting. I saw him bowl in a couple of games on television. Anyone who bowls at 150 [kilometres an hour] is pretty good to watch," White said Sunday at an arrival media conference ahead of two Twenty20 internationals against South Africa.

"I'm not a big cricket watcher on TV when I'm not playing but those kind of players keep you really interested in the game," added White of the 18-year-old from New South Wales.

"I haven't played with Pat before so I'm really looking forward to seeing him in the flesh and out on the ground. He's got some really good pace."

Cummins and several other Australians will have to make a quick adjustment after playing in the Champions League T20 in India ahead of the first match against South Africa at Newlands here on Thursday.

The second match is at the Wanderers in Johannesburg next Sunday.

"It's not ideal," said White. "But those guys have been playing cricket whereas some of the other guys haven't played much because we're coming out of our winter in Australia."

White cited opening batsman David Warner, who finished his Champions League campaign with two successive centuries.

"David has had some good success against

the Proteas and he's one of many dangerous batsmen we have. It's better coming from some hard, competitive cricket than just preparing in the nets."

White said that although it was a young Australian team they had set their sights on winning both matches.

"We've picked the best Twenty20 side we've got available. South Africa are a great team."

"They're resting a couple of players and [injured captain] AB de Villiers will be missed because he's a fantastic player, but there's no doubt they'll be very tough to beat."

White has only been picked for the Twenty20 matches and is not in the squad for the three one-day internationals and two Tests that follow.

"It's just the way it is," he said. "There are only two Twenty20 games in this series so we'll try and do our best in a short stay."

T20 SQUAD

Cameron White (captain), Shane Watson, Doug Bollinger, Patrick Cummins, Aaron Finch, David Hussey, Brett Lee, Mitchell Marsh, Shaun Marsh, Stephen O'Keefe, James Pattinson, Steven Smith, Matthew Wade, David Warner.

FIXTURES

OCTOBER

13 -- 1st T20I, Cape Town

16 -- 2nd T20I, Johannesburg

19 -- 1st ODI, Centurion

23 -- 2nd ODI, Port Elizabeth

28 -- 3rd ODI, Durban

NOVEMBER

1-4 -- v South Africa A, Potchefstroom

9-13 -- 1st Test, Cape Town

17-21 -- 2nd Test, Johannesburg

Test C'hip high on ICC agenda

CRICINFO, Dubai

The ICC Executive Board will meet in Dubai on Monday, to discuss, among other things, the format of the ICC event in 2013, domestic anti-corruption codes and the findings of the Independent Governance Review that was commissioned in June.

Currently, the Champions Trophy is scheduled for June 2013 in England, but there is a possibility that this event could be scrapped in favour of a Test Championship. The board will seek to finalise a decision on this. "Player and public interest in Test match cricket is at an all-time high," Haroon Lorgat, the ICC chief executive officer, said ahead of the meet. "It would be fitting to stage a Test Championship play-off for the top four teams."

Last week, Ronnie Flanagan, the chairman of the ICC's anti-corruption and security unit, said there was a fear that domestic matches could be affected by corruption, given the increased scrutiny of international fixtures. In November 2010, the executive board had directed all Full Members to implement a domestic anti-corruption code by April 1, 2011.

At the meeting, the ICC will receive an update on the implementation of domestic anti-corruption processes. "The ICC and [Full] Members are well aware of the need to enhance education and preventative measures in this crucial area," Lorgat said. "We know that we can never become complacent."

The Independent Governance Review panel is supported by PricewaterhouseCoopers and chaired by Harry Woolf, a former Chief Justice of England and Wales, who will present a progress report at the meeting. It is one of the ICC's initiatives in the new Strategic Plan 2011-2015 that was adopted in April 2011 and comprises an evaluation of the ICC's presidential nomination and election process.

Lorgat said he hoped the review will help mould the ICC's governance framework going forward. "It is our clear ambition to be a well-managed and leading global governing body," he said. "I am hopeful that the review will lead us to set up a governance model that is relevant for our new world."

Shakib relaxed

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aside talks of a problem facing the West Indies fast bowlers and handling their shorter length.

"I don't see many problems in Mirpur," he said. "We have played in England and against Australia here, so I don't think the short ball is much of a problem for us. We would like to stick to our plans, be it batsmen or bowlers."

"It is a challenge for our batsmen, if we could do well against them our confidence will be much better. But I think our batsmen have this confidence of producing the goods. Still, our batting group has to be careful and disciplined against their pace bowlers, if they want to do well," he added.

Lastly, there was a warning shot. The West Indies' weakness with the bat could be a key factor during the series and since none among the Tigers have willingly brought it up, Shakib's candour stood out.

"They [West Indies batsmen] are inexperienced, but they have good batsmen. Obviously we have to do perform in all departments if we want to do something good against them," he said.

Javed wins

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in third, fourth and fifth positions respectively.

Apart from those top five players, four more qualified for the 16-player finals.

Five Grandmasters along with last edition's champion Minhazuddin Ahmed and runner-up Abu Sufian Shakil will join the qualifiers to play the finals, said a press release.



Andy Murray of Britain kisses the Japan Open trophy after beating Rafael Nadal of Spain in the final in three sets in Tokyo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Murray denies Nadal

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Red-hot Andy Murray battled back from a set down against defending champion Rafael Nadal in thrilling fashion at the Japan Open on Sunday to claim his second consecutive title.

The British world number four, fresh from winning last week's Thailand Open, put an end to a five-match losing streak against Nadal with a 3-6, 6-2, 6-0 victory over the top seed in Tokyo, dropping just four points in the final set.

He then came back to the centre court teaming up with his brother Jamie Murray to win the doubles title beating the Czech-Slovak pair of Frantisek Cermak and Filip Polasek 6-1, 6-4.

"It's a very difficult thing to do. It's tough, but I'm obviously happy to win both tournaments, winning with my brother makes it a perfect week," said Murray.

Murray made a slow start in his 18th contest against world number two Nadal, dropping his opening service

game to give the Spaniard an early advantage which he held onto to claim the first set.

But Murray, 24, found his serving range in the second set, raining down six aces and breaking his opponent twice before he stepped up another gear in the decider, allowing Nadal just four points as he swept to the title.

"I played some great tennis, especially in the third set. There were a lot of close games towards the end of the first set and the beginning of the second. I managed to get momentum and didn't give him many chances after that," said Murray.

"It had to be some of the best tennis I played in the third set. I've played some good matches against him in the past but it was just very consistent, didn't make too many mistakes and played well at important moments," he added.

"I played well the last few months in Cincinnati and US Open.... I am going to keep on trying to win, trying to improve and trying to get there [third in the world] at the end of the

year." Murray, who will be the second seed at the Shanghai Masters starting on Sunday behind Nadal, is targeting Roger Federer's number three ranking.

The Scot has won 21 of his past 22 matches, taking titles in Cincinnati, Bangkok and now in Tokyo. His only loss during that period came against Nadal in the US Open semifinals.

Nadal, 25, admitted that Murray's serving was too good at crucial moments.

"His serve worked fantastic at important moments. He served very good in general today," said Nadal.

"He played unbelievable, he made no mistakes in the third set and played aggressive, a lot of winners."

Murray improved his record against Nadal to five wins against 13 defeats. It was his first victory over the Spaniard since August last year in Toronto.

It was Murray's fourth title of the season, following victories in London, Cincinnati and Bangkok.

China Open Berdych's

Women's title goes to Radwanska

Tennis

AFP, Beijing

Czech Tomas Berdych fought back from a set down to overcome Croatia's Marin Cilic 3-6, 6-4, 6-1, in the final of the China Open on Sunday, winning his first title in more than two years.

In the women's final, Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska won a titanic battle with Germany's Andrea Petkovic 7-5, 0-6, 6-4, taking two hours and 32 minutes.

Berdych's victory lifts him above Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga to number seven in the world rankings, and gives the Czech valuable points towards one of the eight berths in the season-ending World Tour Finals in London.

Berdych, seeded third, was playing in his first final of the season after losing in six semis. The win gave the player, who lost in the 2010 Wimbledon final to Rafael Nadal, his first ATP title since Munich in 2009.

"To bring this title really means a lot to me," he said.

"After 29 months, it's been quite a long time, so I'm happy that I could break this up."

Cilic served out the first set emphatically with an ace. But after a close second set, which

Berdych won with a break of serve at 5-4, the Czech ran away with the third.

Unseeded Cilic was disappointed to have missed a crucial chance to break Berdych at the end of the second set.

"I didn't give up. A few points decided the second set... then the third set went the way it did," he said.

Radwanska, who also won a week ago in Tokyo, takes over provisional eighth place for the WTA season-ending event later in the month in Istanbul. Petkovic stands in ninth, just outside contention.

Radwanska, seeded 11th, and Petkovic, seeded ninth, fought a lengthy battle, with the Pole taking the first set -- which included seven breaks of serve -- after just under 90 minutes.

At one point Petkovic crumpled up in pain from her right knee. But she took an injury timeout, got taped up and went right back into it.

In contrast to the first set, it took just 24 minutes for the German to take the second to love.

But in the third set she was broken in the ninth game to go 4-5 down before Radwanska served out for the match.

It was Radwanska's 45th win this season and third 2011 title

Wawrinka battles back

AFP, Shanghai

Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka fought back to reach the second round of the Shanghai Masters Sunday with Germany's Florian Mayer the only other winner on the opening night of action in the main draw.

Wawrinka, for many years the "understudy" to more illustrious compatriot Roger Federer, beat Argentina's Juan Monaco 3-6, 6-3, 6-3 in a tough first-round encounter under lights at the Qi Zhong Tennis Centre.

The Swiss 13th seed was broken three times in the first set as Monaco, a member of the Argentinian team that beat Novak Djokovic's Serbia in last month's Davis Cup semi-finals, capitalised on his erratic form.

But Wawrinka, who has been ranked as high as number nine, turned the tables on his opponent in the second set, forcing three breaks of his own as he levelled the contest.

Wawrinka is at 20th in the world rankings, seven places above Monaco. And he raced to a 5-0 lead in the third set, surviving a late wobble to seal the set and the match.

Earlier, 15th seed Mayer crushed Italy's Fabio Fognini 6-0, 6-2 in just 48 minutes in front of a sparse crowd.

In a one-sided contest, Mayer allowed his dispirited opponent just five points in the first set and barely let up in the second, breaking twice to seal an emphatic victory.

The 28-year-old German, who won his first title in Bucharest earlier this year, kept an iron grip on the match, with out-of-sorts Fognini hurling his racket towards his chair after slumping to 2-5 in the second set.

Vettel drives

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contact between Red Bull's Mark Webber and Mercedes' Michael Schumacher, bunched up the field for three laps while marshals retrieved debris.

Button kept his lead and took the chequered flag for what he considers a second home race, thanks to his Japanese girlfriend and long-standing passion for the country, just 1.1 seconds over Alonso.

"It was a great race, the start was very good -- maybe too good and I ended up on the grass," grinned Button, ecstatic at his third win of the season and 12th of his career.

"It's always a very special place to race, Suzuka. This is one of the most perfect places to race and the crowd are very special. It's one of our most special victories, it means a lot to me," added the Briton, who had written off his own title chances long ago.

Just as he had when he won in Monaco in 2009, his title year, Button parked his car in the wrong place and ran back up the pit lane waving to fans.

Alonso had threatened to take the win but Button had just enough in his tyres to keep him at bay. Vettel was only 0.8 seconds further back.

The win cut Vettel's overall lead over the Briton to 114 points, an insurmountable advantage with a total of 100 left to be won.

Hamilton, who has had numerous calls to the authorities this season,

finished fifth after stewards took no further action for the incident with Massa that ripped off the Ferrari's front wing endplate.

Australian Mark Webber, still without a win this year, was fourth for Red Bull, who have 518 points to McLaren's 388 and could wrap up the constructors' championship in South Korea next weekend.

Schumacher, who briefly led the race during the pitstops, was sixth and Massa seventh.

In a race of only one retirement, Mexican Sergio Perez was seventh for Sauber ahead of Renault's Russian Vitaly Petrov.

Germany's Nico Rosberg, who started on the back row after failing to set a lap in qualifying, roared back to take the final point.

Emily, Mithun's

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The 56-year coach, who had earlier said that both Emily and Mithun may be called for the SAFF Championship camp, has reportedly found alternatives after watching some practice matches among U-19, U-21, U-22 and the national team.

And it was learnt that he may make changes to the side as some eight to nine young players from the camp have drawn his attention.

The Macedonian coach though said that he would only consider those players who would be able to suit his formation as a place in the national team is not guaranteed for any player.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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Solution time: 25 mins.

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: PRINTED STACKS OF PUBLICATIONS LISTING INFO ABOUT VENERATED FIGURES: REVERENCE BOOKS.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals S