

O'Brien recalls finest hour

Cricket REUTERS, Abu Dhabi

One year on from scoring the fastest hundred ever in the cricket World Cup, Ireland batsman Kevin O'Brien has yet to watch the innings in its entirety.

On March 2 last year, O'Brien hit England's bowlers for 113 from 63 deliveries in Bangalore, reaching three figures in 50 balls to eclipse the previous record set by Australia's Matthew Hayden against South Africa four years earlier in St Kitts.

O'Brien's effort propelled his country to a famous victory but, 12 months on, the DVD of that innings is still gathering dust at home.

The 27-year-old all-rounder marked the anniversary by doing two training sessions in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, as he and his Ireland team mates prepared for the ICC World Twenty20 qualifiers taking place this month in the United Arab Emirates.

"I still haven't seen the innings as a whole, although I've seen highlights here and there," he told Reuters by telephone. "I'm not really one for sitting down and watching a full match again. It's great to have in the DVD collection but I won't be pulling it out every couple of months to watch it."

"Maybe a couple of years down the line when I've hung up the boots, then I can sit down with a few beers and watch it in my house," he said.

Not that O'Brien needs to watch the recording to recall his blazing hitting, which included 13 fours and six sixes as Ireland stunned Andrew Strauss's side by chasing down an apparently imposing 327-8 after, at one stage, standing at 111-5 in the 25th over in reply.

"I still remember every run scored; it's hard to forget it and it's pretty alive in my memory," he said. "I can still look back and see the ball being bowled and the shots I was playing."

"It's a bit surreal and sometimes I do have to pinch myself. It was one of those freak innings where everything happened (in my favour) on the day."

"It's great to have from a personal point of view, to be sitting at the top of

the list (of fastest individual World Cup hundreds) and it's great to look back on it as it always puts a smile on my face.

"Time has gone fast for me personally and for the team and it's hard to believe that one year ago it was the World Cup but I can't complain as it's been the best year of my life."

"It changed my life on and off the field. At the start of 2011 I was probably a fair way away from playing county cricket but after that innings



KEVIN O'BRIEN

Gloucestershire came calling, I was over the moon to play for them and I think I did well for them in one-day cricket.

"My name and profile has increased in India 100 percent or even more than that in the last year since that innings, and I was in the IPL (Indian Premier League) auction recently."

"Unfortunately I didn't get signed but my name is still out there and hopefully I can get picked up in the next couple of weeks or so."

With Gloucestershire, O'Brien produced another spectacular innings in the English domestic Twenty20 competition in June 2011, scoring 119 from 52 deliveries against Middlesex, this time hitting 11 sixes and seven fours.

His form and profile gave him the opportunity to take part in the recently-concluded Bangladesh Premier League, something his brother Niall, also an Ireland international, opted to join.

However, with Ireland's selectors making it clear that only players avail-

able for the build-up to the T20 qualifiers would be considered for selection, Kevin chose national duty, rejecting the potential for greater financial rewards and the shop-window for his talents Bangladesh would have provided.

"Cricket Ireland's contract is my bread-and-butter so if I had gone to Bangladesh I would not have been offered a Cricket Ireland contract, so in my opinion it was a no-brainer," he said.

"I wanted to come here (to South Africa) to prepare for the Twenty20 in Dubai. It is one of those things, it was Niall's decision and it was my decision. He still wants to play for Ireland, he is a world-class player, we still need him back in the team and hopefully he can come back in the summer."

Given the Irish administration's desire, announced in January, to achieve test status by 2020, O'Brien said it was vital to qualify for September's T20 event in Sri Lanka.

"It is massive (for us to qualify)," he said. "People in Ireland and other countries expect Ireland to be at every World Cup that is on and that expectation does bring extra pressure."

"We have got a tough group with Kenya and Scotland, as well as Oman, who we played in 2009 and are a dangerous team, and Namibia, who have got some very good hitters and some good bowlers."

"Every team's going to pose a different threat to us. With only two teams qualifying (out of 16) and Twenty20 being so unpredictable, it would be stupid to rule out any team."

"Our training camp (in South Africa) has been good, we have been doing double sessions every day for the past few days, training hard, putting in the hard yards and trying to get everyone in peak form for Dubai."

"We are all confident in our own abilities that we can go out and do the job and we don't need to put any more pressure on ourselves than what is already on us. If we play to our own strengths then hopefully that will be enough to come out on top."

The qualifying event takes place in the UAE from March 13-24, with Ireland's first match against Namibia on the opening day.

WORLD CUP KABADDI Winning start for Bangladesh

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh got off to a sparkling start in the First Women's World Cup Kabaddi Championship after registering wins in both matches on the second day at Patna, Bihar, India yesterday.

Bangladesh handed a massive 70-30 defeat to Malaysia in their first match after dominating the first half 45-17 and then imposed another heavy 85-10 defeat on Italy after leading the first half 52-5, said a Bangladesh Kabaddi Federation press release yesterday.

Prasanna, Lakmal picked for Asia Cup

CRICINFO, Colombo

Off-spinner Seekkuge Prasanna and fast bowler Suranga Lakmal have been included in Sri Lanka's 14-man squad for the Asia Cup, which begins on March 11 in Dhaka. Fast bowlers Dhammika Prasad and Chanaka Welegedara, who were part of the Sri Lanka squad for the Commonwealth Bank tri-series in Australia, have missed out. The three allrounders who were picked up injuries during the tri-series, Farveez Maharoof, Angelo Mathews and Thisara Perera, have been included in the squad.

TEAM

Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Angelo Mathews, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Upul Tharanga, Kumar Sangakkara, Dinesh Chandimal, Lahiru Thirimanne, Thisara Perera, Farveez Maharoof, Sachithra Senanayaka, Nuwan Kulasekara, Lasith Malinga, Seekkuge Prasanna, Suranga Lakmal.

Whatmore gets Pak role

AFP, Lahore

Former Australian batsman Dav Whatmore, who guided Sri Lanka to World Cup glory, arrived in Pakistan to sign a contract as the new coach of the national team, an official said Friday.

The 57-year-old Whatmore, who played seven Tests and one limited-overs international for Australia, coached Sri Lanka to the World Cup title in 1996 and also helped Bangladesh reach the second round in the 2007 World Cup in the Caribbean.

Whatmore was chosen by a three-member coaching committee of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) after regular coach Waqar Younis left the post citing health issues in September last year.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 16 Bangladesh Boys defeated BG Press 2-0 with Rabbi and Mojahid scoring one goal each in the second half while Karwanbazar Pragati Sangsad thrashed Bangladesh Police AC 4-0. Rubel, Babu, Biplob and Mizan struck one goal each.

School Football

Three schools moved into Divisional-level competition of the National School Football Islami Bank Tournament after emerging champions in their respective districts yesterday.

Aminuddin High School defeated Rajaram Institute 1-0 to emerge Madaripur district champions, Ratanpur Tarakanath Biddypath of Kaliganj defeated Khalilnagar High School 3-1 in a shootout to clinch the Sathkira District trophy, Atrai Vabanipur High School thrashed Chakprasad High School 3-1 to become Naogaon district champions and GM Hat High School blanked Dharmapur Educational Estate 2-0 to become Fulgazi



PHOTO: AFP

Serbia's world number one Novak Djokovic reacts during his Dubai Open semifinal against Britain's Andy Murray on Friday.

Andy stuns Novak

Cricket AFP, Dubai

Andy Murray defeated world number one Novak Djokovic 6-2, 7-5 to reach the final of the Dubai Open on Friday.

It was the Serb's first defeat of the season after picking up his fifth Grand Slam title at the Australian Open.

Third seed Murray will play against Roger Federer or Juan Martin del Potro in Saturday's final.

For Murray, it was some revenge for his five set loss to Djokovic in the semifinals of the Australian Open. The Serb went on to beat Rafael Nadal, also in five sets, in the final.

Djokovic was the defending champion in Dubai and Murray reached the final here for the first time.

The Scot took the first set quickly and was 5-2 up in the second before Djokovic bounced back to level at 5-5.

But Murray moved 6-5 up and a sloppy service game from the top seed brought an end to the contest.

On Thursday Djokovic beat the seventh-seeded Tipsarevic 6-1, 7-6 (8/6) but only escaped from set point down at 5-6 in the tie-breaker thanks to a double fault from his fellow Davis Cup star from Serbia.

Friday's other semifinal will see four-time Dubai champion Roger Federer, whose 6-3, 6-4 win over Mikhail Youzhny was his 12th over the Russian, against in-form Juan Martin del Potro.

The big Argentine defeated French fourth seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 7-6 (7/1), 6-2.

For a while Djokovic seemed likely to win comfortably against Tipsarevic, with whom he had "practised a million times."

He hit with great power off the ground,

moved superbly, and won the first set in only 27 minutes.

But he ran into difficulty after failing to convert break points at 30-40 in the fifth and seventh games of the second sets.

Tipsarevic struck the ball more boldly, won many of the longer rallies with tenacious baselining, and got the support of the crowd for his fight-back.

Djokovic, meanwhile, appeared to grow tense, and when he went 0-3 and 1-4 down in the tie-break a deciding set looked likely.

But after Tipsarevic's crucial double fault made it 6-6, Djokovic capitalised with a backhand slice to earn a second successive point against serve, and followed it with the winning combination of a good first serve and an unstoppable forehand follow-up.

Asked about playing Murray again, Djokovic said: "We are the same age and the first time we played each other was at the age of 11. So hopefully we will play another great match."

Visa woes dash

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me the visa," said a disappointed Siddikur over phone yesterday.

"I had a dream of qualifying for the Open Championship for the first time through taking part in the International Final Qualifying as I was in good form. But I could do nothing about the visa," said the 27-year golfer.

Instead, Siddikur is now preparing for the Indian Premier Golf tournament which will be held from March 6 to 10. Then he will travel to Cambodia to participate in another tournament which will be held from March 14 to 17.

Security

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cricket in their country through Bangladesh's visit but everything will depend on the report of the security team.

Pakistani cricket has suffered a dearth of international tours to the country since 2009 after an attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in Lahore.

BU pip

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game," said Maruf. "Four of my vital players -- Bukola, Yusuf, Moro Mohammed and Anwar carried injuries and could not train, which is another reason they could not perform according to their ability," added Maruf.

SL in final, India out

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in his 319th ODI, looked set for a big score before he miscued Pattinson to deep square leg where he was caught by Peter Forrest for 64 off 93 balls.

Chandimal top-scored with 75 off 84 balls and was later named man-of-the-match.

Lahiru Thirimanne posted a half-century before he was bowled by Pattinson in the penultimate over for 51 off 59 balls.

SCOREBOARD

SRI LANKA

Jayawardene run out 5 Watson 7 0 28 0 Dilshan c Wade b Pattinson 9 Doherty 8 0 48 0 Sangakkara c Forrest b Pattinson 64 Chandimal c McKay b Pattinson 75

Thirimanne b Pattinson 51 Mathews c Doherty b Christian 5 Perera c Hussey b Christian 5 Senanayake lbw b Christian 0 Kulasekara lbw b Christian 0 Herath not out 14 Malinga b Christian 2 Extras: (b-2, lb-4, w-2) 8 Total: (All out in 50 overs) 238 Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-17, 3-140, 4-186, 5-195, 6-206, 7-206, 8-206, 9-235, 10-238.

Bowler O M R W Pattinson 10 0 51 4 Hilfenhaus 7 0 29 0 McKay 8 0 39 0 DHussey 1 0 6 0 Christian 9 0 31 5 Watson 7 0 28 0 Doherty 8 0 48 0 AUSTRALIA Wadel lbw b Kulasekara 9 Warner c Perera b Malinga 6 Watson b Malinga 65 Forrest c Sangakkara b Malinga 2 M Hussey c Sangakkara b Thirimanne 29 D Hussey c Dilshan b Kulasekara 74 Christian & b Senanayake 3 Pattinson c Dilshan b Herath 12 McKay run out (Dilshan) 6 Doherty c Dilshan b Malinga 7 Hilfenhaus not out 0 Extras: (w-15, nb-1) 16 Total: (All out in 49.1 overs) 229 Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-18, 3-26, 4-113, 5-140, 6-151, 7-178, 8-187, 9-226, 10-229.

Gayle remains in exile

AFP, St John's

Former captain Chris Gayle was again overlooked by the West Indies when a 30-man training squad for the forthcoming one-day and Twenty20 series against Australia was announced on Thursday.

Gayle hasn't played for the West Indies since last year's World Cup and has been involved in a long-running dispute with the West Indies board.

The WICB said that 17 contracted players, along with 13 others who are under consideration for selection, will participate in a two-week training camp in Barbados from March 1 to 12.

The first one-dayer takes place at St Vincent on March 16. The 17 contracted players are: Adrian Barath, Carlton Baugh, Devendra Bishoo, Kraigg Brathwaite, Darren Bravo, Shivnarine Chanderpaul, Fidel Edwards, Kirk Edwards, Shannon Gabriel, Nelson Pascal, Kieran Powell, Kemar Roach, Andre Russell, Darren Sammy, Marlon Samuels, Shane Shillingford and Devon Thomas.

The 13 additional players under consideration: Samuel Badree, Tino Best, Nkrumah Bonner, Dwayne Bravo, Johnson Charles, Shane Dowrich, Danza Hyatt, Garey Mathurin, Sunil Narine, Kieron Pollard, Denesh Ramdin, Krishmar Santokie and Dwayne Smith.

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Table with 6 columns: SI No., Tender No., Description of the Materials, Cost of Tender Documents (Non-refundable), Amount of Tender Security, Last date & time for submission of Tender. Includes details for UFFL/FP-OP/11/2011-2012/582 and UFFL/FP-OP/12/2011-2012/583.

GD-932 (মজিবুর রহমান) সিনিয়র সহকারী সচিব ফোনঃ ৯১৬৪০২১