

Substance over style

Cricket

SHAFEEH MAJID

Shivnarine Chanderpaul the batsman is as effective as he is ugly. 10,000 runs at an average of 50 concretely speak to the former and the yawns of non-partisan cricket fans as he comes into bat subjectively illustrate the latter. The important thing about Chanderpaul is that this depressing effect he has on many fans is nothing compared to how he probably affects the opposition. When Shiv comes to the crease, bowlers and fielders know that they have an arduous, almost hopeless task of sending him back from whence he came -- droopy shoulders, oversized helmet and all.

Chanderpaul's technique might be unique for a left-hander. Generally, those who bat the wrong way round like to utilise the angle of over-the-wicket right arm bowlers to swashbuckle the ball through the off side. Among recent players Brian Lara, Saeed Anwar and Saour Ganguly all exhibited this classic, left-handed style. Chanderpaul chose to adapt the method of the first truly great West Indian player, right hander George Headley instead. The two



SHIVNARINE CHANDERPAUL

eyed stance is a difficult one to breach. Anything straight is worked away through the leg side; anything short is pounced upon in a heartbeat. Fluency in off-side play is hampered, but the tendency to edge catches behind the wicket on that side -- a weakness that goes hand in hand with the swashbuckling way -- is also reduced.

Chanderpaul's chosen technique reflects his temperament and mind. Runs on the board are his measure -- style is inconsequential. He is unlikely to be bored out by a tight off stump and good length attack and as long as he is at the wicket, the runs will come. This method is also suited to the needs of his team, who have been one of the weakest in world

cricket for a decade and a half now. The emphasis is on safety, not aggression.

Some criticise Chanderpaul for slow scoring and claim that he is not talented. What is "talent" anyway? The ability to play attacking shots to balls most could not. One cannot make the Test side at age 19 or score a 69-ball Test hundred (the fourth fastest in Test history) without being phenomenally talented. Just as Sachin Tendulkar chooses to minimise risk in Test cricket (his performance in ODIs are a greater reflection of just what kind of strokeplay he is capable of if he wishes), so does Chanderpaul. He does not grind out of necessity but because he finds that to be the most effective way of putting runs on the board. And when you've put 10,000 of them there, particularly when most around you have been failing, who is to say that his general, second-gear pacing is faulty?

Shivnarine Chanderpaul is a gifted player, clear in what his job is and smart enough to find the best way of doing it as well as possible. If not many have burst into raptures of joy at the prospect of watching him play, still fewer bowlers have licked their lips in anticipation of bowling to him. He is a true and wonderfully effective servant of West Indian, and world cricket.

Mumbai keep Pune in check

INTERNET, Pune

Harbhajan Singh led Mumbai Indians from the front to snatch a thrilling one-run victory over Pune Warriors in an Indian Premier League match at the Subrata Roy Sahara Stadium here on Thursday.

Pune Warriors lost wickets at regular intervals and failed to chase down a modest 121-run target. The hosts missed out by a run to hand over the victory, which seem to be heading their way when they started the run chase.

Lasith Malinga, Munaf Patel and Pragnan Ojha supported their skipper to lead Mumbai to an almost improbable victory.

Mithun Manhas, with 42 not out, was the top-scorer for Pune as he tried his best to resurrect the run chase, after four early blows.

Asked to bowl first, a discipline pace attack coupled with brilliant fielding helped Pune restrict Mumbai to 120 for 9.

Four run-outs, which include two in the final over, made sure that Mumbai lost wickets at regular intervals and set a modest 121-run target for the hosts.

SCORES IN BRIEF
MUMBAI INDIANS: 120 for 9 in 20 overs (Tendulkar 34, Franklin 25, Karthik 18 not out, Malinga 14, Peterson 13; Kumar 2-9, Nehra 2-19)
PUNE WARRIORS: 119 for 6 in 20 overs (Manhas 42 not out, Uthappa 18, Ganguly 16, Clarke 14, Kumar 10 not out; Harbhajan 2-18, Malinga 2-25)
Result: Mumbai Indians won by 1 run.
Man-of-the-match: Lasith Malinga.

Sreesanth out for 5 months

CRICINFO, New Delhi

Sreesanth, the India fast bowler, will be out of action for five months as he needs two surgeries on his toes. He hasn't turned out for India since the Tests against England last August, and has only played one first-class match since, before picking up a toe injury.

Sreesanth had opted against going for surgery in December, instead preferring ayurvedic treatment. He had originally hoped to be fit in time for the CB series in Australia earlier this year, and had said at the end of February that he was looking forward to playing again in three weeks.

He had initially travelled with Rajasthan Royals this season before heading to the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore for his rehabilitation late last month.

'End of the pain'

Asif released from prison

Cricket

AFP, Sheikhpura

The father of disgraced Pakistan cricketer Mohammad Asif said his son's release from prison Thursday had brought an end to six months of pain for his family and backed the paceman to return to the game.

Asif, 29, was freed from jail in Britain after serving half of a 12-month sentence over a spot-fixing scandal and was taken by his friend Mohammad Haroon to his house in suburban London.

"Asif was very happy at his release and his first words were 'thanks Almighty,'" Haroon, a cricket coach and Asif's mentor, told AFP by phone from London.

He said Asif would hold a press conference soon, after consulting his lawyer.

Asif was jailed in November after being found guilty of conspiring to cheat and conspiring to accept corrupt payments over deliberate no-balls bowled during the Lord's Test against England in August 2010.

In the Pakistani village of Machikay, some 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the eastern city of Lahore, Asif's family voiced relief at his release.

"I have spent these six months in pain but I am sure that it's over now," his father Hasan Deen, a farmer, told AFP. "I have not talked to him for seven months but I am happy that his difficult days are over."

Pakistan's captain for the infamous Lord's Test, Salman Butt, is still serving a 30-month term while bowler Mohammad Aamer was released in February this year after completing half of his six months in a youth prison.

All three players were also banned by the International Cricket Council (ICC) for violating the players' code of conduct, but Deen backed his son to make a strong return to the game.

"My son is a lion and lived as a lion even in the jail. He has not played for two years but I



MOHAMMAD ASIF

am sure that if he comes on the field he will shock everyone with his bowling," said Deen, busy supervising the wheat crop on his fields.

Asif's lawyer Ravi Sukul said Asif had begun an appeal against his criminal conviction and will soon proceed with an appeal against his seven-year ICC ban in the Swiss-based Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Asif's brother Ashraf said the whole village was eagerly anticipating his return and insisted he was an innocent party in the scandal.

"We strongly believe that Asif didn't do anything wrong, because he was so good at cricket that he was trapped by some people," said Ashraf.

"I am sure that he will play again." Deen said he felt no anger towards his son despite his involvement in one of the most shameful episodes in the history of Pakistani cricket.

"I am not angry with him, why should I be? He will be welcomed back home and if he wants to play cricket I will not stop him," said Deen.

Agent Mazhar Majeed was jailed for 32 months for his role in orchestrating the plot to bowl no-balls to order.

Basketball course ends

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A seven-day long basketball training course ended on Wednesday in the port city.

Japanese coach So-Kian and national trainer Mahbubur Rahman conducted the training programme where a total of 176 participants took part in the programme organised by Chattagram Jela Krira Sangstha (CJKS).

After the training course the certificates were distributed among the participants where CJKS general secretary AJM Nasiruddin was present as chief guest.

Injury scare for Anderson

AFP, London

England duo James Anderson and Stuart Broad had an awkward day for different reasons when they returned to county action in Wednesday's County Championship clash between Lancashire and Nottinghamshire at Old Trafford.

Seam bowler Anderson gave England a scare ahead of their three-Test series against the West Indies, which starts at Lord's in a fortnight, when he was sent to hospital for X-rays after suffering a couple of blows to his right thumb while in the field.

However, the spearhead of England's attack returned to bowl in the afternoon session for the reigning county champions, although he later left the field for ice treatment on his thumb.

Meanwhile, Broad -- who often makes no secret of his feelings when things do not go his way -- could find himself in disciplinary trouble after contesting an umpire's decision.

In his first match since returning home early from England's tour of Sri Lanka with a calf problem, Broad fell for a golden duck when caught at short leg by Steven Croft off Simon Kerrigan.

Broad complained to both the fielder and the umpires before walking back to the pavilion. Nottinghamshire were bowled out for just 169 on Wednesday's first day of four, becoming the latest side to make a low score following the earliest start yet to an English season that, coupled with rain, has left many groundsmen complaining they have not had enough time for pitch preparation.

ICC readies to pick CEO

Cricket

CRICINFO, Mumbai

The ICC's nomination committee, headed by its president Sharad Pawar, will meet in Mumbai on May 6 to conduct interviews with the four short-listed candidates to determine the successor to Haroon Lorgat, the outgoing chief executive officer. Though the identity of the four has been kept a closely guarded secret, it is understood that David Collier, the current ECB CEO along with Dave Richardson, who is ICC's general manager of cricket, were two names on the shortlist, picked by the global executive head-hunting company Egon Zehnder.

Pawar would be joined at the table by Alan Issac (the ICC vice-president), Julian Hunte (the West Indies Cricket Board president), Keith Oliver (Cricket Scotland chairman). Also present will be the pair of N Srinivasan and Giles Clarke (the BCCI and ECB heads), who were co-opted on to the nomination panel at the last minute.

Though the names of the two other candidates could not be ascertained, Collier has been tipped as a likely favourite at the outset only because of his extensive experience in various administrative and management roles at the ECB, where he has been the CEO for the last eight years. "He has been around for a long time and hence knows the game. He knows what is topical in the game and has been England chief executive for a long time, too," an ICC member board source told ESPNcricinfo.

But the source also pointed out that one possible blot against Collier could be his open embrace of Allen Stanford, the American businessman who is in jail in the USA after being convicted for fraud. In 2008 Stanford had joined hands with the ECB to promote Twenty20 cricket and Collier, along with Clarke, were involved in drawing up the plans.

"Collier comes with the Stanford mark with him [though]. How can they even think of a guy who went into that deal? Some people in the ICC board don't trust him," the

source said.

As for Richardson, the source said, despite the former South African wicketkeeper's clean image, the one big factor that was likely to stand against him was his inexperience and lack of skills in commerce and finance. "He knows the ICC environment fully well, but he is not skilled in the commercial and financial nous and those are important skillsets for any chief executive needs to run an organisation," the source said. "You need a man with knowledge in diverse fields."

The source felt that Pawar, who wielded control at one time at the ICC, would not be as influential in the selection process. Eventually, he felt, it would be the pair of Srinivasan and Clarke, who would control things at the selection table. "They will not keep quiet. These two believe in running the board as if they are the only executive. So they are likely to influence things," the source said.

Another factor that could figure in the selection process, the source said, was the recent decision by the ICC board to adopt one of the recommendations of the Woolf Report to split the role of the president into two - that entails creating a post of chairman and reducing the president to an "ambassadorial" role. "The danger is this split could cause the undermining of the role of the CEO," the source said. The chairman, the source noted, would then play the leadership role while the chief executive ran the corporate body. He feared boards like the BCCI and ECB could then overpower the future CEO.

According to an official from a different member country, he did not foresee any problem with if an independent was picked as Lorgat's replacement. "If the person is a capable, experienced candidate, he can fit into the role provided he understands the role," he said.

The candidate who will be eventually picked would be recommended to the ICC executive board at the annual conference, to be held at end of June in Kuala Lumpur, before making his name public.

Yoga Sachin's secret

FROM PAGE 16

his international career, and each time he has returned to the game to lead India's charge.

His most recent brush with injury was when a delivery from Aussie speedster Doug Bollinger hit his finger in the opening IPL match in Chennai on April 4, forcing him to miss the next four matches. He has since returned to action, but is believed to be still carrying a few niggles.

"Since Sachin was apparently convinced that the other forms of medication cannot fully heal his various injuries, he has turned to yoga," said the source.

"While he has attended Iyengar's classes in the past too, this time he was convinced by pacer Zaheer Khan into trying out his yoga exercises again. Zaheer himself benefitted from yoga last year when he injured his ankle in England and missed almost the entire tour." Sachin has tried a variety of medical treatments to overcome injuries and become mentally tough to tackle the rigours of international cricket.

In 2005, when an elbow injury was refusing to leave him, he apparently benefitted by discussing his physical and mental issues with well-known psychologist BP Bam. Before that, Sachin had sought Bam's help before touring Australia in 1999-2000.

Batting maestro, 39, has had three sessions in about a month with renowned yoga guru BKS Iyengar in Pune.

Lord's upgrade on hold

AFP, London

Lord's owners Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) said Wednesday they would create a new redevelopment plan for the 'home of cricket' after a row which led former British Prime Minister John Major to resign from the MCC committee.

Major, in an unusually public dispute which has seen several members of English cricket's establishment engaged in a bitter argument, quit in November after MCC announced it was scaling back its 'Vision for Lord's' plan, originally conceived at a cost of £400 million (\$634 million) in 2007.

This aimed to increase the ground's 28,500 capacity on the back of a programme of luxury flats built at the Nursery End of the ground and was supported by the Australian former MCC chief executive Keith Bradshaw, who now holds a similar post at the South Australian Cricket Association.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 — and aahs
5 Stir-frying vessel
8 Gets older
12 Opening night
14 Cat of "Iron Chef"
15 Priesthood school
16 Barrel
17 Actor Chaney
18 Slim and trim
20 Extraterrestrial
23 Put your foot down?
24 Infant
25 Cabal member
28 High card
29 Sacha Baron Cohen portrayal
30 Haul
32 Emulate Ponce de Leon
34 Car
35 Freeway access
36 "The — is Right!"
37 Horse-radish kin
40 That woman
41 Partner
42 Florida State athlete
47 Libertine
48 Makes like
49 Act
50 Used a shovel
51 Halt
DOWN
1 Photo — (PR events)
2 Raw rock
3 Height of fashion?
4 John le Carré hero
5 Remove gradually
6 Hockey legend
7 Pennsylvania, the — State
8 Take
9 Soccer score
10 Formerly, formerly
11 Rice wine
13 Part of the loop
19 White House turndown
20 Lawyers' org.
21 "Arsenic and Old —"
22 Mountain goal
23 Drink noisily
25 Made a vow
26 Needle case
27 Campus mil. grp.
29 Spill the beans
31 Trouble
33 Beseeched
34 Sports venues
36 Collins or Donahue
37 Prison division
38 Lotion additive
39 Pivot
40 Too confident
43 Ostrich's kin
44 Mel of Coopers-town
45 Virgo neighbor
46 Kreskin's claim

Solution time: 24 mins.

EPIC TADS PTA
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SNIE CRTV LEET
EJODY VET NEEF
RCR ATE
NATION GOGGOL
ALIGH ENNUIT
TEEHIEE DILUTE
TISA ANI
DAIS RIP GOGO
ELM EYCH HALL
ETA TREN THAI
WON HYDE SUMO

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CRYPTOQUIP

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M F X M W G I M J C L E U . K S G I M
C U X D D O J U K B X W X S J .

Saturday's Cryptoquip: WHEN DISNEY'S LITTLE MERMAID IS A PASSENGER ON A PLANE, ONE MIGHT SAY SHE'S AN AERIAL ARIEL...
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals T