

Fergie wary of 'stupid errors'

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has told his side to avoid the "stupid errors" that marred last season's Champions League campaign, following Thursday's draw for the group stage. United have been drawn alongside Braga, Galatasaray and CFR Cluj in Group H, in what appears to be one of the more straightforward groups in this season's draw.

"We have the experience of playing against Galatasaray in the past and we will always remember the 'Welcome to Hell' banners," Ferguson told ManUtd.com.

"So it's always a difficult type of match."



Mushfiq echoes teammates

Team departs for West Indies



SPORTS REPORTER

The Tigers left Dhaka last night for Trinidad to play their last tournament before the ICC World Twenty20, which will be held in Sri Lanka from September 18.

Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim echoed the sentiments of his teammates and coach Richard Pybus while talking with the reporters at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport before the team departure.

Both the coach and his teammates have been focusing on the team's good preparation ahead of the T20's mega event for last couple of days and Mushfiqur did nothing different.

"We must ensure that we keep the momentum before the World Cup, so the four-nation T20 tournament in West Indies is important for us. Everybody is confident because we have played a number of T20 matches in the last couple of months. The preparation is really fantastic for us," said Mushfiqur.

The Tigers, who will play the Trinidad Quadrangular T20 competition under the banner of BCB XI, will play a practice match against a local selection on September 5 before taking on Barbados on September 6. They will play their second game against

Afghanistan on September 7 and play their third and final match against Trinidad & Tobago on September 8 at the Queen's Park Oval, Port of Spain. They will then head directly for Sri Lanka on September 9 to take part in the ICC World Twenty20.

"We are not going to the World Cup as a favourite but we are very much capable of pulling off a surprise in the tournament. I think we have got enough matches before the World Cup to know the craft of the game. Definitely New Zealand and Pakistan are two tough teams but we have the ability to beat them," said a confident Mushfiqur.

Bangladesh has been placed in Group D along with New Zealand and Pakistan in the ICC World Twenty20. The Tigers will take on New Zealand on September 21 before meeting Pakistan on September 25. Both matches will be played at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium.

"The SPL experience will help us. My observation is that pace bowlers will get assistance from the pitch of the Pallekele, so we have to think about this matter seriously. Anyway now we have to focus on the tournament in West Indies and after that the two warm-up matches in Sri Lanka," said Mushfiqur.

Before the group matches, Mushfiqur Rahim's men will play two practice games against Zimbabwe on September 15 and against Ireland on September 17 in Colombo.



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (R) embraces skipper Mushfiqur Rahim at the departure lounge of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday as they head off to Trinidad and Tobago.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Siddikur misses the cut

SPORTS REPORTER

Siddikur Rahman slumped to his worst performance of the season when the vaunted golfer failed to make the midway cut in the Omega European Masters at Crans Montana, Switzerland on Friday. The 27-year old golfer, who finished 18th in the same event last year, was no where near his top form as he posted a disappointing 4-over par 146 over the first two rounds, falling short of the cut by four shots. This was the first time in a very consistent season that Siddikur failed to make the cut.

Siddikur had struggled in the testing conditions at the Crans-Sur-Sierre Golf Club on the opening day, but managed to post an even-par score (71), but things went horribly wrong yesterday as he started the day on the wrong foot firing a bogey on the opening hole. Things went from bad to worse as he faltered with two more bogeys and two double bogeys in the next seven holes before managing a birdie in the ninth to finish

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Packed crowds for athletics

AFP, London



A near-capacity crowd at the Olympic Stadium on Friday greeted the first day of athletics at the Paralympics, as the first medals were won in the field events.

Nearly 80,000 people packed into the venue in east London, where the opening ceremony was held on Wednesday night, roaring T54 wheelchair racers around the track in the women's 5,000m heats.

Denmark's Jackie Christiansen, who won gold in the men's F42/44 shot with a throw of 18.16m, added: "It was really exciting out there. It was surely the biggest crowd I've seen in my lifetime."

"And the crowd were great. They were with us all the way."

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Denmark's Jackie Christiansen competes during the men's shot put final yesterday in the London Paralympic Games, winning the event with a throw of 18.16 metres.

PHOTO: AFP

Fitness concerns on coaches' minds



SPORTS REPORTER

Country's top booters, split into four groups, have had six days of training till yesterday yet their respective coaches are not happy with the progress they have achieved, especially with their fitness level.

The seven-day training schedule is quite insufficient to get the players back to full fitness level since the players have been idle for the last two months after the end of the fifth Bangladesh League early July and gained a lot of weight. So the players will be nowhere near fitness when they get to the practice matches on September 2, 4 and 6.

Of the 81 players to have been training, some 30 to 35 players will be selected after the six practice matches for a training camp of further one month before naming a final squad which will travel to Nepal to play three exhibition matches.

According to the coaches, the players are well aware of the fact that their places in the national side is not certain as the coaches now have more options to choose from in

every position.

"They are professional footballers but their fitness level is poor. Actually they're not aware of their job during the off-season."

"It is not possible to make them fit in seven-day training, rather I have been working on to increase their professionalism and boost them psychologically as well the fitness aspects he should be careful about," said Green Team coach Nurul Haque Manik yesterday.

"I don't want to mention any names but many national players don't know the importance of gym and proper food schedule a player needs to maintain," said the former midfielder adding that five to seven players from the second string 19-member squad are likely to get chance in the 30-35 squad.

The condition of the Red team, comprising senior players, is comparatively better than other three squads as some of the senior players kept themselves busy with training during this period.

"I am working improving their fitness level as some of them refrained from training in the last two months," Red Team coach Golam Jilani said. "Apart from fitness training, I am also working on tactical side as I felt

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Roddick calls time

Venus sent packing

AFP, New York



Andy Roddick celebrated his 30th birthday on Thursday by announcing his retirement as Roger Federer, the great Grand Slam tormentor of the American, eased into the third round at the US Open.

Roddick, a former world number one, who won his only major title in New York in 2003, admitted his level was struggling to match the big three of Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic and he will quit once the US Open is over.

"I have decided that this is going to be my last tournament," said Roddick, who is guaranteed an emotional reception on Arthur Ashe Stadium on Friday night when he plays Australia's Bernard Tomic for a place in the last 32.

"I feel it is the right time to do it. These other guys have gotten really, really good and I'm not interested in just existing on tour. I don't want to disrespect the game by coasting home."

Roddick's announcement came a day after Kim Clijsters, a four-time Grand Slam champion, suffered a second round defeat which sent her into retirement.



US tennis star Andy Roddick announces his imminent retirement after his match at the US Open on Thursday.

PHOTO: AFP

Roddick, whose ranking is now down at 22 in the world, lost to Federer in the Wimbledon finals of 2004, 2005 and 2009.

That last All England Club defeat, an epic match which ended 16-14 in the fifth set, was Roddick's last memorable campaign and he has not got beyond the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam since.

Top seed and five-time champion Federer reached the last 32 with an easy 6-2, 6-3, 6-2

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Taylor gives NZ advantage



AFP, Bangalore

Ross Taylor put India's attack to the sword with a robust century as New Zealand posted 328-6 at stumps on the opening day of the second and final Test in Bangalore on Friday.

The skipper, who promised ahead of the Test that his team would play attacking cricket against Indian spinners, led from the front with an aggressive 127-ball 113, smashing two sixes and 16 fours in his seventh Test hundred.

Wicketkeeper Kruger van Wyk hit an 85-ball 63 not out for his maiden Test half-century, while opener Martin Guptill cracked a 79-ball 53. Doug Bracewell was unbeaten on 30 when play was called off due to bad light and rain.

Bracewell and Van Wyk have so far put on 82 for the unfinished seventh-wicket stand.

Left-arm spinner Pragyan Ojha, who opened the attack in overcast conditions, was the most successful bowler with 4-90.

Taylor completed his hundred in

style, cutting Ojha for a four and then lofting the spinner over long-off in the same over for his second six. His century came off just 99 balls.

He was out lbw while attempting to sweep Ojha soon after the tea-break.

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and Ojha, who shared 18 wickets in India's victory by an innings and 115 runs in the opening Test in Hyderabad, had to work hard for success on a good batting track.

New Zealand, who collapsed to 159 in their first innings and 164 in the second at Hyderabad, put in an improved batting performance, thanks to Taylor's brilliant knock.

New Zealand were under pressure at 89-3 following Ojha's double-strike in the morning, but Taylor propped up the innings with a 107-run stand for the fourth wicket with Daniel Flynn (33).

Taylor counter-attacked to neutralise the Indian spinners, slog-sweeping Ashwin over square-leg for the first six of the match and then smashing four boundaries in an over from Ojha.

The New Zealand captain, who reached his half-century off just 46 balls, also drove paceman Zaheer

Khan through the covers and then straight for two successive fours.

New Zealand lost two wickets in the afternoon as Flynn fell lbw while attempting to sweep Ashwin and James Franklin (eight) was superbly caught by Suresh Raina at mid-wicket off Ojha.

Ojha earlier removed Kane Williamson (17) and Guptill to put pressure on New Zealand, but Taylor dominated the Indian attack with an exciting strokeplay in the afternoon.

New Zealand lost opener Brendon McCullum for no score in the second over after electing to bat, before Guptill and Williamson steadied the innings with a 63-run stand for the second wicket.

But Ojha dismissed both the batsmen, trapping Williamson leg-before and then having Guptill caught by Gautam Gambhir at mid-wicket.

Guptill, dropped on 17 by Virat Kohli at third slip off Zaheer, hit eight fours in his 12th Test half-century in 26 matches.

The New Zealand opener played some attractive shots, hitting seamer Umesh Yadav for three fours in an over and then reaching his half-century with a boundary in the bowler's next over.

HOCKEY WORLD LEAGUE Bangladesh off with flying colours

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh's bid for qualification for the second round of the Hockey World League got off to a scintillating start as the boys in red and green recorded an emphatic 6-1 win over Hong Kong in the opening match of Round-1 in Singapore yesterday.

Hong Kong were considered as the main threat to Bangladesh in the group, which also included hosts Singapore and Thailand, as Bangladesh had drawn their last match against the same opposition 1-1 in Asian Games qualifiers in Dhaka in 2010. Since then the two sides had never met and Bangladesh had no clear idea of how much their South East Asian counterparts had progressed in the meantime.

Before leaving for Singapore, coach Mahbub Haroon also expressed his worries about Hong Kong but on the field yesterday, the boys in red and green hardly gave a chance to the opposition once after taking the lead in the ninth minute through striker Rassel Mahmud Jimmy.

Captain Mamunur Rahman Chayan doubled the lead in the 15th minute converting a penalty corner as Bangladesh went for the breather with a 2-0 lead.

Hong Kong pulled a goal back in the 45th minute with Arif Ali converting a penalty corner.

But Bangladesh stepped up the attack and widened the margin, thanks to an own goal from Hong Kong in the 52nd minute. A minute later, Jimmy made it 4-1 through a field goal.

Sarwar Hossain, wearing the red and green jersey for the

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