

ICC U-19 WORLD CUP
Chance for
young guns
to fire

INTERNET

Future stars will get a chance to show their talent, potential and prowess in a truly global event when the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2014 gets underway across the United Arab Emirates today.

On the opening day, four matches will be played with 1998 champions England taking on the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi, Zimbabwe facing Canada at Abu Dhabi Oval 1, New Zealand squaring off against Sri Lanka at Sharjah Cricket Stadium, and South Africa and the West Indies going head to head at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

Bangladesh, which has been drafted in Group B along with Australia, Afghanistan and Namibia, will start their campaign tomorrow against Afghanistan.

This year's ICC U19 CWC carries extra significance as it is taking place a year before the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015. As such, a lot of cricketers will be looking to excel in this tournament so that they can catch the eye of their national selectors and earn the honour of representing their countries in cricket's biggest extravaganza which will be staged in Australia and New Zealand from 14 February to 1 March next year.

It is one of the most important and followed cricketing events in which teenagers get a taste of international experience, pressure and exposure, and also receive training and education on anti-doping and anti-corruption.

The 16 teams in the ICC U19 Cricket World Cup 2014 have been divided equally in four groups. The top two teams from each group will progress to the Super League quarter-finals, while the two bottom teams from each group qualify for the Plate Championship quarter-finals.



WILL YOU DO THE JOB TODAY? Bangladesh batsman Anamul Haque checks his bat ahead of an optional net session at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday. The right-hander on Wednesday mistimed the last ball, a high full toss, of the first T20I against Sri Lanka only to be out caught by the bowler and lose the match by two runs.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Anamul just wants to look ahead

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong



Having taken 14 of the improbable 17 runs required to

ahead," Anamul told reporters during an optional training session at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium yesterday.

After Anamul failed to dispatch the full toss, the umpires on the field had asked the third umpire to check if the ball was above waist height. Replays showed the ball at the height of the batsman's waist but dipping downwards as it reached Anamul and the third umpire's decision went against the batsman.

The incident became the talking point of the match overnight and received plenty of attention in the media. Anamul however did not want to make a comment on the issue.

"It was completely the umpire's call and I can't say anything about it. I

could not judge anything while batting but when I came out I heard people talking about the delivery," said Anamul.

"I am not sad about the ball not being called a no-ball. All I am

thinking about right now is of all the places that I want to dispatch a similar delivery in the next game," the batsman added in a confident note.

Before the last delivery of the over was bowled the Sri Lankan players huddled around the bowler and held a two-minute long discussion.

During that period Anamul too was forming his own plans in his head and the last thing he had expected was a full toss.

"Judging by all the deliveries in the over, I expected him to bowl a yorker or try a slower, I thought of a number of things in my head. The aim was to hit a boundary," said Anamul.

"Full toss, half volley, people miss it at times. I needed 17 off the last over and I already had taken down 14, so it wasn't about being nervous. Probably if I got the ball according to my expectations I could have dispatched it," explained Anamul.

Tigers seek redemption

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong

The second T20I today at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium will be Bangladesh's third-last T20 fixture before the ICC World Twenty20. Apart from this game they play the UAE and Ireland on March 12 and 14 at Fatullah. So while levelling the series will no doubt be the main aim for the hosts, they could ring in the changes in their attempt to identify their best 11 in this format.

That the team management has one eye on the ICC World T20 was evident from the fact that they experimented quite a bit in the first T20, picking three pacers in the side.

The likeliest of changes that could take place in the second T20 is the inclusion of uncapped Sabbir Rahman. Apart from Sabbir, the remaining newcomers in the squad got their chances and the selectors might want to have a look at him ahead of the world cup. In that case Forhad Reza, who bowled two overs in the first game, might get the axe.

Shohag Gazi was taken apart by Kusal Perera in the first game and hasn't really been in form since the Test series. He could possibly make way for Mahmudullah Riyad, whose off-spinners have been effective of late. If the team management does decide to go in with just one keeper then Mithun Ali, who was out for

nought in the first T20, could make way for Mominul Haque who was rested in the first T20, or even Al Amin Hossain to stick to the three-pronged pace attack. Rubel Hossain bowled with some good pace in the first T20 and ideally should be playing the second.

The Sri Lankans won't be tempted to make too many changes and will look to take the series with a set team. However, they could bring in slow-left arm all-rounder Angelo Perera instead of Seekkuge Prasanna, who could not make the most of the first T20. Perera made his debut against Bangladesh in 2013.

The hosts had a near-perfect game on the first day, but they will want their top batsmen to carry on with their innings. The likes of Tamim Iqbal, Shakib Al Hasan and Shamsur Rahman lost their wickets after getting set. Had one of these batsmen joined Anamul, then the chase could have ended on a different note.

The visitors will have a similar worry and hope that their major batsmen get runs. Had it not been for Kusal Perera's flashy 64, the Sri Lankans would have been in hot water. They will want their senior players to step up.

Sri Lanka have won all the three encounters between these two sides. Bangladesh will hope they can break that trend when the teams meet for the fourth time today.

Hosts worry Marvan

NAIMUL KARIM from Chittagong

Former Sri Lankan opener and currently the visitors' assistant coach Marvan Atapattu expects Bangladesh to come back hard in the second T20I today at the Zohur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

Atapattu described Sri Lanka's two-run win as an exciting start to the limited overs matches.

"They can (come back). They are a dangerous team and we pay the respect that they deserve in this format, especially playing at home. They know the conditions better than we do. We should not be complacent, and play as well as we can," Atapattu told reporters after a training session yesterday.

"When it comes to T20 the excitement runs till the end and there was no better example than yesterday (Wednesday). One or two mistakes and the game could have changed in a matter of six to twelve balls," he added.

Wednesday saw the first ever T20 game at the ZACS and Atapattu admitted that the visitors were a bit surprised with the wicket.

"The wicket did surprise us a bit. Having said that, the bowlers in the middle part of the Bangladesh inning did well. They restricted our scoring. We soon understood that it is going to be slow and low as the day progressed and tried to restrict them when we bowled," he said.

When asked if the visitors felt lucky to be on the winning side of a game where just one ball made the difference, he said, "It's not like that. That's the way the game has gone and that's the way it's going to go, you have to be strong enough," he said.

As one of Sri Lanka's best openers, one of Atapattu's main roles in the side is to look after the batsmen. With regards to T20 cricket, his mantra is simple: "The game moves so quickly that you should be able to express yourself freely; there's no time settle in. You need to be in the right frame of mind to be successful."

Tons for Asif, Sayem

SPORTS REPORTER

Asif Ahmed continued his run-spree in the National Cricket League as the right-hander cracked his second hundred on the first day of the third-round matches at the Fatullah Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Riding on the 21-year old batsman's unbeaten 171, Dhaka Metro bounced back from their early collapse to finish the first day on a high at 295-3 against Barisal. Asif along with Marshall Ayub, who got back among the runs with a 79-run knock, added 190 runs for the third wicket after the openers were dismissed for 18.

At the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium in Khulna, Sayem Alam hit an unbeaten hundred and Alok Kapali accompanied him with 63 as Sylhet finished the day on top against Dhaka Division, who were bundled out for 100 in their first innings.

Chittagong's Mohammad Moniruzzaman shone with the leather at the Shahid Chandu Stadium in Bogra as his five-wicket haul restricted Khulna to 265 runs in their first innings.

Rajshahi managed a decent total of 260 for nine in their first innings against hosts Rangpur thanks to number nine batsman Muktar Ali, who made an unbeaten 50.

SCORES IN BRIEF

DHAKA METRO: First innings 295-3 in 90 overs (Asif 171 not out, Marshall 79)

DHAKA DIVISION: 100 all out in 39.4 overs (Nafid 29; Nabil 4-30, Zayed 2-35, Imran 3-26)

SYLHET: 185-2 in 48 overs (Sayem 111 not out, Kapali 63 not out)

KHULNA: 265 all out in 89.5 overs (Ripon 59, Nahidul 64, Dollar 48; Moniruzzaman 5-30, Mehedi 2-46, Yasin 2-62)

RAJSHAHI: 260-9 in 90 overs (Sanjamul 33, Muktar 50 not out; Shuvashis 2-30, Shuvo 2-45, Tanvir 3-46)

Johnson jolts Proteas

AFP, Centurion



Australia fast bowler Mitchell Johnson continued his Ashes series form with a devastating bowling performance on the second day of the first Test against South Africa at Centurion's SuperSport Park on Thursday.

Johnson took four for 51 as South Africa crashed to 140 for six at the close of play, still 257 runs behind Australia's first innings of 397.

AB de Villiers was the only batsman to withstand the onslaught, scoring 52 not out.

The raw figures do not do justice to the destruction caused by Johnson against the world's number one rated team.

Johnson needed just four balls to strike a major blow for Australia when he dismissed South African captain Graeme Smith with a vicious bouncer. He followed up with the wickets of Alviro Petersen and Faf du Plessis in his third and fourth overs.

Peter Siddle trapped Hashim Amla leg before wicket for 17.

Smith started confidently, pulling Ryan Harris's first ball for four and taking ten

runs off the first over of the innings.

Petersen scored a single off Johnson's second ball, bringing Smith on strike against the left-arm fast bowler, who destroyed England by taking 37 wickets at an average of 13.97 during the Ashes series.

Johnson's first ball to Smith was short and there was a half-hearted appeal as it thudded off Smith's thigh pad to short leg.

The next ball was a fast bouncer which climbed towards Smith's head. The batsman lifted his bat in front of his face and the ball looped over the slips, with Shaun Marsh running back from third slip to take a fine catch.

Petersen made only two before flashing at Johnson to be caught by wicketkeeper Brad Haddin and Du Plessis followed soon afterwards, fending another short delivery to Michael Clarke at second slip.

Hashim Amla was leg before wicket to Peter Siddle to reduce South Africa to 43 for four before AB de Villiers and JP Duminy staged a minor recovery with a fifth wicket stand of 67.

Johnson was involved in Duminy's dismissal taking a superb diving catch running back from mid-off when Duminy mistimed a lofted drive against off-spinner Nathan Lyon.

IPL matches here still a possibility

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi



Could Bangladesh be the venue of the seventh edition of the high-profile Indian Premier League or at least some matches of the tournament?

Bangladesh, along with the UAE, is being speculated to be one of the venues by the organisers of the competition due to security concerns posed by upcoming Indian parliamentary elections, the dates of which are clashing with the event.

The IPL authorities will be meeting Indian home ministry officials next week and a final decision on the venue and the exact schedule is expected to be taken in the coming 10 days. The federal elections are scheduled to be held in April-May.

"We are considering so many options with regards to the venue. We are waiting first for the home ministry to check the possible dates," Sanjay Patel, the secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India, told the media after the IPL governing council meeting on Thursday. "As far as possible our interest is to hold the IPL in India. Then, probably, South Africa is the preferred venue at the moment. The second option is also there and the third option is also there."

Officials, however, stopped short of naming the second and third options which are speculated to be Bangladesh and the UAE.

"What we are asking for is we need a window from April 9 to June 3. We will be speaking to the government officials in the home ministry. We want to hold maximum number of matches in India and if we get the green signal, probably we can hold all the matches in India," he said.

The IPL had been shifted to South Africa in 2009 as well because of security concerns posed by general elections.

Patel stated that the IPL had kept all the eight franchises in the loop. This was also confirmed by the franchises, who said they had countered the possibility of some matches being held abroad while assembling their squads.

Jamal misses Asian Tour cut

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh golfer Jamal Hossain Molla endured acute disappointment after missing the Asian Tour Qualifying School Final Stage cut after the second round of the event presented by the Sports Authority of Thailand at the Imperial Lakeview Golf Club in Hua Hin yesterday.

Jamal went into the tournament in confident mood after a strong showing in the PGTI (Professional Golf Tour of India) last year. He was given direct entry to the tournament but got off to a worst possible start in the first round with a five-over-par 76 to finish the round in joint 183rd position on Wednesday. Needing a cumulative score of one-under-par 142 to make the halfway cut, Jamal recovered somewhat to post an even-par 71 yesterday, but the effort was nowhere near enough as his total score came to five-over-par 147 to finish in joint 145th position.

He hit an eagle in the 12th hole to go with birdies in the fourth, eighth and 18th holes, but five bogeys put paid to any hopes of a turnaround.