

YASIR SHAH RULED OUT

Pakistan leg-spinner Yasir Shah has been ruled out of the upcoming ODI series against Bangladesh due to a hand injury. Yasir needed three stitches in his left thumb after getting hit during Pakistan's practice match against BCB XI in Fatullah on Wednesday. A PCB statement said: "Yasir Shah got injured today during practice match. He got stitches on his left hand. Replacement for the ODI series will be announced in due course."

—CRICINFO



SUPER SABBIR: Sabbir Rahman was the star of the day at Fatullah yesterday as his whirlwind 123 led a second-string Bangladesh side to a morale boosting win over the visiting Pakistanis. He led a senior Bangladeshi side to its first ever win over a Pakistani outfit in a bilateral tour.

PHOTO: STAR

Sublime Sabbir

SPORTS REPORTER



On the face of it, the BCB XI's thrilling one-wicket win over the visiting Pakistani side may just be jotted down as a tour opener which won't even go into the record books as a List A encounter.

However, yesterday's win at Fatullah symbolises something more than statistics and numbers for Bangladesh. The win, after all, was Bangladesh's first ever win in a bilateral tour-match against a Pakistani side and boy did it showcase some drama!

From Sabbir Rahman's fierce 123 to the middle order's ability to fend off a strong Pakistani pace attack and hold on to win, every bit was enjoyed by the 8,000 odd fans who turned up for the practice match.

The second-string Tigers had bowled brilliantly until the 44th over and restricted the visitors to 203 for 8,

However the Tigers leaked 65 runs in the last six overs and even failed to bowl the visitors out.

The momentum was with the visitors after the exchange as well as the hosts slumped to 9 for 2 after six overs. Tamim Iqbal -- who decided to play the match less than 24 hours prior to the game in a bid to regain form -- and Rony Talukdar opened and managed nine runs before they both departed with Tamim scoring all nine of the pair's runs.

After 20 overs they were struggling at 96 for 4. A year ago the Tigers would have fallen like a house of cards in this situation, however the new-found spirit after the World Cup changed that.

Sabbir and Imrul Kayes shared a century stand for the fifth wicket. Sabbir hammered eight sixes and

seven fours in his 99-ball knock, while Imrul dogged it out with a 56-ball 36.

Mohammad Hafeez later described Sabbir's innings as one of the best he had seen. "It was one of the best innings you will witness as a viewer. He didn't panic. He dominated the bowling."

Sabbir was extremely elated himself.

"Be it a practice match or an international match, this is my first century. I enjoyed it a lot. We won the match and it feels really good."

After Sabbir got out, the hosts lost quick wickets and stumbled to 228 for 8. Shohag Gazi came in at that point and smashed a 28-ball 36 and, along with the help of the tail-enders, managed to edge BCB XI home.

While Hafeez brushed aside the defeat and stated that there would be no extra pressure on the visitors, Sabbir thought otherwise.

"Whenever a team goes outside they tend to break down personally when they lose the first game. Pakistan will think about this defeat. This match will definitely have some sort of impact on them," said Sabbir.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTANIS: 268 for 9 (Hafeez 85, Fawad 67 not out; Shuvagata 3-39, Shohid 1-34)
BCB XI: 270 for 9 in 48.5 overs (Sabbir 123, Imrul 36, Shohag 36; Junaid 4-38, Rahat 2-54)
Result: BCB XI won by one wicket.

'We don't have an upper hand'

SPORTS REPORTER

Unlike the sure-shot statements made by cricketers in the last few weeks when they indicated that Bangladesh were favourites to win against

Pakistan, coach Chandika Hathurusingha decided to keep things simple.

"I won't say we have an upper hand because the records suggest that they have been playing well in Bangladesh for some reason... maybe the condition suits them or whatever.

"In the past we have won only once [in 32 ODI encounters] but the good thing is that our team is playing as a team and we know our roles. If we play well, I think we will give them a good go this time," Hathurusingha told reporters at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

When asked if the hosts would have to overcome a mental barrier to beat their South Asian neighbours, he said, "I think the boys are feeling confident. I don't know anything about a mental block, maybe the conditions here are similar to Pakistan, so they are adapting faster than the other teams."

"But if we play to our potential we can give them a good contest," he added.

The main obstacle, according to Hathurusingha, will be the visitors' bowling attack, bolstered by the return of spinner Saeed Ajmal, who was left out of Pakistan's World Cup squad after the ICC deemed his bowling action illegal.

"We haven't seen him with the new action. Hopefully he won't be as effective as before but his experience is something we all have to respect. How we handle him will be a key to the outcome."

As for the Tigers, a key area of concern would be their opening combination. While Tamim Iqbal is yet to find form, Rony Talukdar will only be playing his first game. The Sri Lankan though doesn't see the scenario as a concern.

On another note the coach avoided speaking about Naimur Rahman's outburst against him to the media earlier this month, when the cricket operations chairman criticised the coach for speaking against the board's selection committee and accused the Sri Lankan of breaking the code of conduct.

"I can't comment on these issues. But I think it's unfortunate that attention was diverted to these issues rather than the good things that the team did in the last few days. It's time for us to focus on the team," said Hathurusingha.



CHANDIKA HATHURUSINGHA

'All I want is consistency'

SPORTS REPORTER



An aggressive Shakib Al Hasan blurted it out first; the in-form Mahmudullah Riyad and the confident Rubel Hossain joined in the chorus later on. However, captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza was lot more practical when he talked about the Tigers chances in the coming three-match ODI series against Pakistan. 'Favourites' was not the word, instead Mashrafe said that they were in a good position to prove a point.

"The team is confident after the World Cup and I think we are in a good position to be consistent in our performances," said Mashrafe yesterday ahead of the three-match ODI series, which will kick off tomorrow at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.

"We have to prove that we are consistent in our performance which is a big challenge for us. I don't think the series will be easy for us because Pakistan is a good side, especially their bowling. So, we have to play good cricket to maintain the brand of cricket that we put up in World Cup. Instead of thinking about the result, we have to focus on consistency and playing a good brand of cricket," added Mashrafe, who will miss tomorrow's first ODI because of a ban for slow over rate in the World Cup.

"There is even a scope for established teams like Australia to improve. There is lot of to improve in our performance, especially in Powerplays and death over bowling, to become a settled team. If any team wants to establish themselves as a good, settled side they must continue their improvement."



MASHRAFE BIN MORTAZA

BD U-19s a win away

SPORTS REPORTER

Nazmul Hossain Shanto led from the front with an all-round performance to give Bangladesh Under-19 cricketers a 3-1 lead over South Africa Under-19s in the seven-match youth ODI series as the home side posted a 26-run win at the Sheikh Kamal International Cricket Stadium in Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Shanto hit team-highest 45 and then took two wickets.

The home team made a good start after deciding to bat as Saif Hassan (41) and Pinak Ghosh (42) added 72 runs for the opening stand in 17.5 overs, but they finished their quota at 206, witnessing the last five wickets fall for 25 runs.

In reply, the visitors were restricted to 180 for nine. Wiaan Mulder made a 135-ball 80.

The fifth match will be held in Chittagong on April 18.

SCORES IN BRIEF

BANGLADESH U-19s: 206 all out in 50 overs (Saif 41, Nazmul 45, Ghosh 42; Glover 3-47)
 SOUTH AFRICA U-19s: 180-9 in 50 overs (Mulder 80; Mosabek 2-19, Saifuddin 2-7, Shanto 2-19)
 Result: Bangladesh Under-19s won by 26 runs.

Eng lead despite Blackwood ton

AFP, Antigua & Barbuda



West Indies batsman Jermaine Blackwood struck his maiden Test century, yet England were in commanding position with a first-innings lead of 104 runs midway through the third day of the first Test in Antigua on Wednesday.

Blackwood remained unbeaten on 112 runs having played 220 deliveries as James Tredwell mopped up the tail taking four wickets.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 399 (Bell 143, Root 83, Stokes 79; Taylor 3-90, Roach 4-94, Holder 2-69)
 WEST INDIES: First innings 294 all out (Brathwaite 39, Chanderpaul 46, Blackwood 112 not out; Tredwell 4-47)

Farewell to Richie

SYDNEY MORNING HERALD



Even in his memory, the imitations will long live on. And so as a cast of Australian cricket luminaries and media identities gathered to remember Richie Benaud on Wednesday, the voice of international cricket was still being mimicked by those closest to him.

"There wasn't one person who didn't try to talk like Richie," Shane Warne told Channel 9 after flying in from London for the service. "Everyone tried to tell a story with the bottom lip with Richie or everyone would try to imitate Richie ... like everyone at home does."

Warne joined other greats at The Australian Golf Club for the service to remember the former Australia Test captain. It was held shortly after a private funeral for immediate family. Benaud's longtime co-commentators on Channel 9 including Bill Lawry, Ian Chappell and Mark Taylor all recalled memories. Other guests included current Australian

Test captain Michael Clarke along with retired greats Dennis Lillee, Doug Walters, Brian Booth and Brett Lee, plus Benaud's fellow legendary Channel 9 commentator, Ray Warren.

Benaud's former teammates Neil Harvey and Alan Davidson were also in attendance and entertained mourners with memories of Benaud during a celebration of his life.

"Memories live longer than dreams and we've all got our memories," Davidson said.

And perhaps the most significant of those will be of the man who wore the cream, the bone, the off white and the beige in the commentary box -- all the while not needing to say a word to pass on the most succinct advice to his fellow commentators. "The only other time you get some advice from Richie, I think, is from the look," Taylor said. "I'd sit with him in a co-host position and I would say something and he would give me a bit of a frown. I thought, 'that's got to be a load of crap'."

Lawry and Chappell remain the longest serving members of Channel 9's commentary team after Benaud's death -- and both agreed they were very fortunate to know the former journalist from a young age.



LONG-TIME COLLEAGUE: Ian Chappell delivers his memories of Richie at the The Australian Golf Club in Sydney.

PHOTO: GREGG PORTEOUS

Delhi win at last

STAR SPORT DESK



Mayank Agarwal and Yuvraj Singh helped Delhi Daredevils to a five-wicket win over Kings XI Punjab to register their first win of the 8th Indian Premier League, which also ended their 11-match losing streak in the IPL, at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium on Wednesday.

Delhi chased down the 166-run target in 19.5 overs, with five wickets and a ball to spare. Anureet Singh took consecutive wickets (Yuvraj & Mayank) in the penultimate over to make the match interesting, but Delhi had the match all but in their grips by the time.

SCORES IN BRIEF

KINGS XI PUNJAB: 165 for 7 (Sehwal 47, Saha 39; Tahir 3-43)
 DELHI DAREDEVILS: 169 for 5 (Agarwal 68, Yuvraj 55; Anureet 2-33)
 Result: Delhi Daredevils won by 5 wickets

IN A NUTSHELL

Butt apologises once again

ANI, Karachi

Pakistan's disgraced former Test captain Salman Butt has once again sought forgiveness for his infamous role in the 2010 spot-fixing scandal, insisting that he is a changed man now, as he advises youngsters to avoid shortcuts in life.

Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Aamer had all been banned for being a part of infamous no-balls in the Lord's Test against England in 2010. Butt said that whatever happened with them should not go on in the future generations, insisting that they need to tell them that shortcuts in life should be avoided, the Dawn reported.

Kamblí now tweets sorry

AGENCIES, Mumbai

After an extraordinary rant at cricketers-turned-commentators Navjot Singh Sidhu, Rameez Raja and Shoaib Akhtar on Twitter on Tuesday, Vinod Kamblí has now apologised and said that those tweets were sent by his friend through his Twitter account.

Kamblí's Twitter handle had hit out at Sidhu for his style of punditry and also expressed fury over former Pakistan cricketers like Rameez and Akhtar being called to give their expert views on the pre and post game shows of the IPL on Sony Six.

However, Kamblí is now claiming his innocence in the matter, suggesting that a friend of his misused his account and issued an apology to those who might have been offended by those earlier comments.

Gambhir's 4 lakh rupees

AGENCIES, Kolkata

After the Ice Hockey Association of India's desperate call for support to fund the national team for an Asian-level tournament in Kuwait, Kolkata Knight Riders captain Gautam Gambhir pitched in with a donation of 4 lakh rupees.

The former India vice-captain has taken it as a "moral responsibility" to support the sport.

The 33-year-old, who runs Gautam Gambhir Foundation, came to know about the team's SOS calls on social networking sites and his team contacted them and assured them full support.

Nothing that she doesn't do!

AGENCIES, Melbourne

She bats, bowls and keeps wicket, and is a champion player in a women's competition, but Chelsea Rundle is not your average all-rounder.



Not only is the Mawson Lakes girl already a star senior player at the age of just 12, being named Para Districts Cricket Association's women's B-grade player of the season, but she also captains Craigmores under-12 boys' team.

Averaging 49 with the bat in the Rose & Crown's women's team, Chelsea also led the boys to the semi-finals last season. Now she's setting her sights on state representation and, eventually, an Australian cap.

"It's hard sometimes because people are relying on you doing everything, but I love it," the Year 7 Riverdale Primary student said, adding that "the boys usually listen to what I tell them".