

Scrap batting Powerplay

CRICINFO, Mumbai

Removing the batting Powerplay and allowing five fielders outside the circle between overs 41 and 50 were among the major suggestions made by the ICC's cricket committee that met in Mumbai over the weekend.

The committee also suggested a free-hit for all no balls in ODI and T20s, and not just for the front-foot calls. The recommendations made during the meeting were subject to the approval of chief executive's committee (CEC).

Noting that even though the current playing conditions had fostered aggressive and innovative tactics from captains, the committee felt the fielding teams at times were left with limited defensive options.

The alteration thus suggested would mean there would be two fielders outside the circle for the first 10 overs, four for the next 30 and five for the last 10 overs. The doing away of the batting Powerplay meant only one block of 10-over Powerplay remained, two less than in the 2011 World Cup.

'Terrible NZ twins'

ANI, Wellington

British media have labelled New Zealand speedsters Tim Southee and Trent Bolt as 'terrible twins', saying they have already set off alarm bells in the England camp.

The deadly pair had arrived in London, fresh from stunning World Cup efforts and a strong showing in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

Kiwi coach Mike Hesson said the two have remarkably improved and complete the team. England batsman Ian Bell also praised the duo, saying that their greatest quality was the ability to swing the ball late.



Bangladesh opener Tamim Iqbal (L) and paceman Rubel Hossain spent a lot of time at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium gym on Monday as they get ready for the forthcoming home series against India, who arrive in Dhaka on June 7 to play one Test and three ODIs.

PHOTO: STAR

Shakib, Tamim could be rested

SPORTS REPORTER



The national players will feature in the last round of Bangladesh Cricket League (BCL) after a short fitness stint in the national camp, but opener Tamim Iqbal and all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan are unlikely to appear in the four-day games starting from May 24 at two venues.

The selectors are in favour of resting Shakib, who toured India to play for KKR in the IPL soon after the completion of the Pakistan series, and Tamim, who may not play this match as a precaution for the knee injuries.

"What we felt is that Shakib needs some rest ahead of the home series against India. On the other hand, if our medical team feels that it would be better for Tamim to take rest, we definitely will go with their advices," chief selector Faruque Ahmed said yesterday.

"Tamim is fit to play the match and he also said today that he had no problem to play the BCL game. But our opinion is that it would be better if he is rested and continues the rehab programme for his knees. He didn't get enough time for rehab after having knee surgery. Even if he plays, we will impose some restrictions," said BCB physician Debashis Chowdhury.

Tamim had a surgery in his left knee in December last year and then he suffered an injury in his right knee in the BCL one-day game before the home series against Pakistan.

The case of the left-outs

SPORTS REPORTER



There were a number of vital issues that were raised after the Bangladesh Cricket Board announced its 23-member preliminary squad for the India series. It was understood that there would hardly be any change in the final squad, but the long list was a bit confusing regarding the future of certain players who were ignored despite having done well in the domestic circuit.

Off-spinner Shohag Gazi is one of them. Ever since he corrected his action, Shohag scalped 28 wickets in the last National Cricket League, which was the fourth highest in the competition with the top three spots dominated by left-arm spinners. He



AL-AMIN HOSSAIN
2ND HIGHEST WICKET-TAKER IN ODIs IN 2014
VERDICT: 'STRUGGLING TO COPE WITH NEW ACTION'

hasn't done too badly with the bat either, scoring two centuries in the ongoing Bangladesh Cricket League.

In the last three years, Shohag has been Bangladesh's second highest wicket-taker in Tests.

With Bangladesh's Test spinners not in the best of form, there was a possibility of a comeback for the off-spinner. However, selectors believe that the spinner needs



SHOHAG GAZI
2 CENTURIES IN BCL & 4TH HIGHEST WICKET-TAKER IN NCL THIS YEAR.
VERDICT: 'ISN'T READY FOR INTERNATIONAL CRICKET YET'

more time with his new action.

"Shohag has been doing well. He has batted well too. But we feel that he needs more time to get settled with his new action. He is definitely in our minds and that's the reason why we have kept him in the High Performance [HP] programme which begins next month," said chief selector Faruque Ahmed.

Al-Amin Hossain is another bowler whose action was reported and he has witnessed a similar fate. In 2014, Al-Amin was the third highest wicket-taker for Bangladesh in ODIs with 17 wickets.



ALOK KAPALI
HIGHEST RUN-GETTER IN BCL WITH TWO 200S THIS YEAR.
VERDICT: 'NOT EVEN IN PLAN B'

"We don't think he is the same bowler ever since he corrected his action. He hasn't been in good form either. But that doesn't mean that we are ignoring him. We really want him to make a



ABDUR RAZZAK
HIGHEST WICKET-TAKER IN BCL AND SECOND HIGHEST IN NCL THIS YEAR.
VERDICT: 'LOSING OUT TO YOUNGER LEFT-ARMERS'



ROBIUL ISLAM
TOOK 21 WICKETS IN SIX TESTS. THE HIGHEST BY A PACER SINCE 2012.
VERDICT: 'FITNESS AND FORM'

comeback. And that's why we have included him in the HP unit as well," said Faruque.

Also in the HP unit is Robiul Islam. Once the most sought-after Test pacer for Bangladesh, Robiul's fitness issues continue to linger.

There were also questions regarding Abdur Razzak. Ever since the left-armer was left out of the national side, he took 41 wick-

ets in six matches in the National Cricket League (second highest) and leads the wickets column in the ongoing Bangladesh Cricket League. According to Faruque though, the veteran is losing the battle to the likes of Arafat Sunny and Taijul Islam.

"The squad that we have chosen have the best possible players in it," he added.

There were also questions regarding Alok Kapali. The batsman hammered two double centuries this year and is currently the leading run-scorer in the Bangladesh Cricket League with an average of 111.

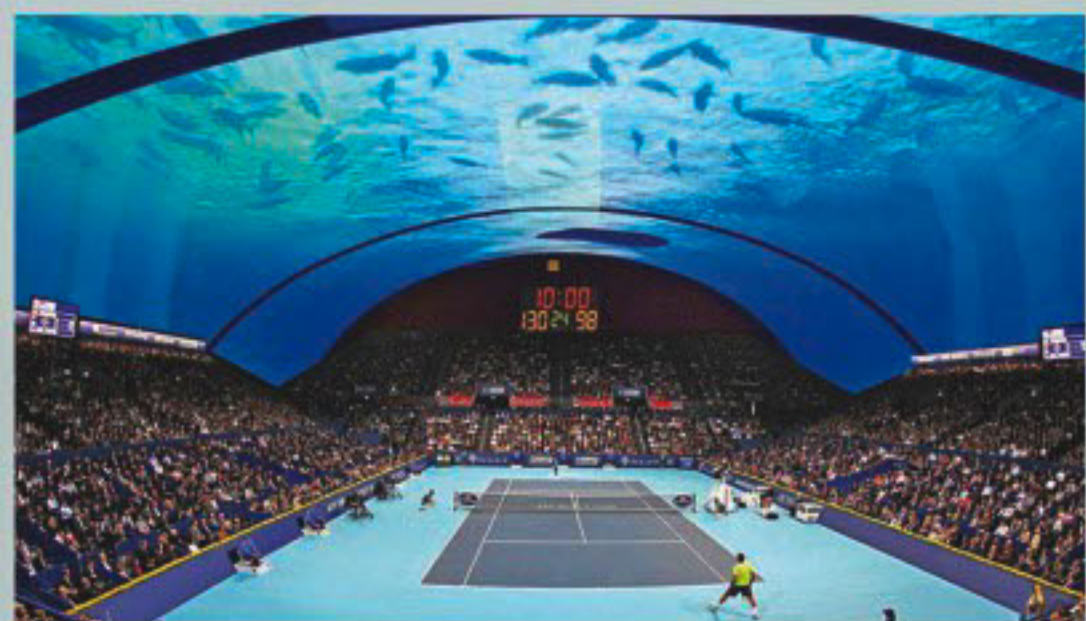
A possible return for the 31-year-old, however, was dismissed by Faruque. "Kapali isn't even in our plan B. He is not fit for international cricket. There are so many other batsmen who are ahead of him," said Faruque.

IN A NUTSHELL

Tennis moving underwater?

INTERNET

Dubai, which boasts of the world's highest tennis court, may also become home to the first underwater tennis centre where spectators can watch games from below or above the sea life through a massive glass dome.



Krzysztof Kotala, a Polish architect who owns a studio in Warsaw, is currently seeking investment from local players to make the ambitious project a reality.

Interestingly, the proposed location for the project (arguably one of the world's lowest tennis courts) is just next door to the highest tennis court atop the Burj al Arab skyscraper in Dubai.

"There is not an investor but I would like to get interest [from them] as I think it is a good idea," Kotala, 30, was quoted as saying.

Mahela on Legends' T20 radar

INTERNET

Former Sri Lanka captain Mahela Jayawardene has been approached for the proposed Legends' T20 matches, promoted by legends Sachin Tendulkar and Shane Warne to make inroads into the untapped US market.

A source close to the Lanka's legendary batsman confirmed the development.

"Yes, Mahela has been approached to play in the league promoted by Tendulkar and Warne. At this point I can only confirm about the offer being made but a few details still need to be worked out," a reliable source close to the cricketer told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The chances of Jayawardene signing for the proposed Legends' T20 matches seem to be more than 90 per cent at the moment.

Difficulties await Rafa?

AFP, Rome

For the past 10 years Rafael Nadal has been virtually unbeatable at Roland Garros, but that could all change at this year's French Open as the Spaniard's woes continue on clay.

Nadal, stunned in the final of the Madrid Masters a week ago by Britain's Andy Murray, has won only one tournament -- in Buenos Aires -- on his favourite surface this year.

Having already lost twice this year to Italian Fabio Fognini, Serbian rival Novak Djokovic and Murray, the 14-time Grand Slam winner was eliminated from the quarterfinals of the Italian Open by Stan Wawrinka, who also beat Nadal to the Australian Open title in 2014.

If Nadal's defeat to Murray was confirmation that things were not quite going to plan, his failure to reach the latter stages in Rome means he will likely miss out on a top four seeding for Roland Garros.

Seedings for the second Grand Slam of the year, which begins on May 24, will be announced by the French Open organisers shortly, and Nadal is unlikely to be given the luxury of a top four seeding, meaning he could meet one of his main rivals as early as the quarterfinals.

Barring 2009, when Sweden's Robin Soderling upset him in Paris, Nadal has won the French Open every year since 2005, stretching his record to nine titles till last year with victory over Djokovic.

Maldives calling Mirona, Sabinas

SPORTS REPORTER



Sabina Khatun's dazzling performance in Maldives' futsal championship recently has opened up the door of participation for more female footballers from Bangladesh. The prolific striker will leaving for Maldives today once again. But this time she will be taking part in the women's football championship and will be accompanied by two more players -- goalkeeper Sabina Akter and midfielder Mirona. These three players of Bangladesh national team will play for the Dhivehi Sifainge Club in the championship, which will be held from May 24 to June 14.

The officials of the Maldives national defence force side initially communicated with Sabina, who had played for the Maldives Police in the futsal championship earlier this year where she scored 37 goals in six matches, in a bid to recruiting more players from Bangladesh.

Even though neither the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) officials nor the players themselves could provide enough details about the championship, the players are nevertheless excited with the opportunity of playing abroad.

"I am very excited because this time I am going with two of my fellow footballers. We will try to give our best in our respective positions. As we know each other very well, I think our combination will help our club to get good results," said striker Sabina during a press briefing at the BFF House yesterday.

"I am very happy to get a chance to play abroad and our effort there will be to perform well so that more footballers from Bangladesh can get opportunity to play in Maldives," said Mirona.

Striker Sabina will receive 1200 dollars as salary while goalkeeper Sabina will each receive 600 dollars week for their three-stint.



(From L) Mirona, Sabina Khatun, Sabina Akter

PHOTO: COURTESY

Zimbabwe off to Pakistan

AFP, Harare



Zimbabwe left Harare for a high-stakes tour of Pakistan, national cricket association spokesman Lovemore Banda said Monday.

"The team has left [Harare]," Banda told AFP. "They are going [to Pakistan] via Dubai."

There were doubts whether the five-match tour would go ahead after the massacre of 45 minority Shiites in an attack on a bus in Karachi last week.

It is the first tour of Pakistan by a Test-level team since seven Sri Lankan cricketers were wounded during a 2009 attack by militants in Lahore.

Zimbabwe are scheduled to arrive in Pakistan Tuesday and play two Twenty20 and three one-day internationals amid massive security at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

Since the attack on the Sri Lankans, Pakistan have staged 'home' matches in the United Arab Emirates.

Views on the tour are mixed with Sri Lanka-born Zimbabwe coach Day Whatmore upbeat.

"I appreciate the significance of this tour to Pakistan and I am happy to go," he told Zimbabwe radio.

But the Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA) said their security advisors were against the tour.

A South African radio station quoted FICA chairman Tony Irish saying: "Tours to Pakistan remain an unacceptable risk and teams are advised against travelling there."

With top nations refusing to visit through fears of militant attacks, it's been a long time in the wilderness for the cricket-mad Pakistan and its players, fans and administrators.

Risks remain high and the massacre last week nearly prompted Zimbabwe to pull out at the last minute.

Even when they take the field from Friday, it will be without International Cricket Council umpires after the world body decided not to send match officials because of security concerns.

However, excitement is building as international cricket returns, even in a small way against unglamorous Zimbabwe.

Large banners featuring fast bowler Wahab Riaz -- one of the few bright spots from Pakistan's mediocre World Cup campaign -- festoon roadsides across Lahore.

"The last six years were unbearable," Test captain Misbahul Haq told AFP.

ITINERARY

Date	Match
May 22	1st T20
May 24	2nd T20
May 26	1st ODI
May 29	2nd ODI
May 31	3rd ODI
(All games in Lahore)	