

SPORT

Tigers' short DPL stint before Sussex departure

SPORTS REPORTER

Ace all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan flew directly to India from Sri Lanka to play for the Kolkata Knight Riders in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL), while Mustafizur Rahman got clearance from the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and, according to team manager Khaled Mahmud, the left-arm pacer is likely to fly to India tomorrow to join Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Sunrisers coach Tom Moody also confirmed Mustafizur's plans. "Mustafizur is more than likely to join the squad in Mumbai,"

Moody said at a press conference in Hyderabad.

Cricket fans are still engaged in discussions about their hero Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's retirement from T20Is, and some formed a human chain in front of the BCB's headquarters at Mirpur yesterday, especially after BCB president Nazmul Hassan fuelled the fire after arriving with the team from Sri Lanka. He stated that Mashrafe had not retired, but only quit captaincy and would be available for T20Is if and when needed.

However, the rest of the national team players will now shift their focus to the Dhaka Premier Division Cricket League, which is scheduled to kick off from April 12.

It is still unconfirmed how many matches the national players will play in the country's most coveted 50-over competition as they will be leaving for Sussex on April 26, where they will take part in a training camp as part of their preparations for the tri-nation series in Ireland and the ICC Champions Trophy in England.

The foreign staff including head coach Chandika Hathurusingha, who went on leave after the series against Sri Lanka, will join the team in Sussex.

"We will sit tomorrow [Sunday] to discuss the details regarding the national players' participation in the Premier League and upcoming tours to Ireland and England,"

informed chief selector Minhajul Abedin yesterday.

After going through a ten-day camp in Sussex, the Tigers will travel to Ireland to play the tri-nation series against the hosts and New Zealand. They will play their first match against Ireland on May 12 at Malahide in Dublin.

The Tigers will return to England following the tri-nation series to play in the ICC Champions Trophy, where they have been drafted into Group A alongside England, Australia and New Zealand.

They will play their first match in the competition against England on June 1. The tournament will conclude on June 18.



Pakistan's legendary batsman Younis Khan has announced that the upcoming Test series against the West Indies will be his last act in international cricket.

PHOTO: AFP FILE

YOUNIS KHAN A Test cricket great to retire

AFP, Karachi

Veteran Pakistan batsman and former captain Younis Khan announced on Saturday he will retire from international cricket after the upcoming Test series in the West Indies.

The 39-year-old has captained Pakistan in all three formats, and in 2009 led them to their only World Twenty20 title in England.

"I will be retiring... with my head held high," he told a press conference in Karachi. "I think this is the right time as every sportsman has to take this decision in his career."

Younis hit a hundred in his first Test against Sri Lanka in Rawalpindi in 2000, which started a glorious career during which he also scored a double hundred in Pakistan's series-levelling win against India at Bangalore in 2005.

He needs only 23 runs to reach 10,000 Test runs, a milestone he missed out on after his team's disastrous tour of Australia in January this year, when Pakistan lost all three Tests.

He has scored 34 Test centuries in 115 matches -- the most by any Pakistani batsman -- and is set to become the first Pakistani and 13th batsman overall to score 10,000 or more.

"I was planning this for few months," he said, but added that he "always tried to play for my team and for my country".

One of the worst moments of Younis' career was when Pakistan lost their coach Bob Woolmer during the 2007 World Cup in West Indies, he said.

Younis is the second high-profile player to retire this month after his team mate Misbah-ul-Haq also announced his decision to quit on Thursday following months of speculation.

Former Pakistan captain Wasim Akram paid rich tribute to Younis.

"He is still fit but there is always a time

when you have to decide about leaving," said Wasim. "He has set many records which prove his greatness. Whenever he played he played with his heart and commitment."

"It will be tough to replace players like Younis and Misbah, so Pakistan will have to work hard in Tests without them."

CAREER IN NUMBERS						
TESTS	RUNS	HS	AVE	100	50	45 65
115	9977	313	53.06	34	32	1072 69

ADULATION POURS IN

To me Yousif Khan should be renamed 'Unique' Khan for his selflessness & honesty towards Pakistan cricket. Take a bow brother, you are a champ.

— Shoab Akhtar

Congrats Yousif Khan on a super career. A man who could smile even when there was absolute carnage around him. Don't know how he did that.

— Monty Panesar

One of our greatest! #ThankyouYousifKhan for serving the country with such pride. I'll always remember some great moments together, especially WT20 2009.

— Shahid Afridi

Yousif Bhai thank you for making all of us proud for so many years. You were great role model and you always will be. Thank you for everything you did for Pakistan. We were lucky to have you as our senior player



Ardent fans of one of Bangladesh's bravehearts, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, showed their gratitude to their hero in front of the Bangladesh Cricket Board headquarters in Mirpur yesterday. The fans carried different banners and placards thanking the Narail Express for his years of dedication.

PHOTO: STAR

Maxwell fires Punjab to win

PTI, Indore

Captain Glenn Maxwell led from the front with a quickfire knock to fashion a six-wicket win for Kings XI Punjab in their Indian Premier League opener against Rising Pune Supergiant here today.

Maxwell made short work of the 164-run target by blasting 44 off just 20 balls as Kings XI cruised to victory with six balls to spare.

His unbeaten 79-run stand with David Miller (30 off 27) took the game away from the opposition in front of a packed Holkar Stadium.

Maxwell's fireworks came after Ben Stokes led Rising Pune Supergiant's recovery with a blistering 50 off 32 balls, helping his team post 163 for six.

With the win, Kings XI have begun the competition on a promising note after finishing at the bottom in the previous two editions.

It was the first loss this season for Pune, who had beaten Mumbai Indians in their tournament opener on Thursday.

With Kings XI 73 for two in 10 overs and needing another 91 for victory, the match was hanging in balance. Then Maxwell came and ran away with the match with some brutal hitting.

The Australian, made captain of the side ahead of established names like Eoin Morgan, hammered four sixes and as many fours to begin his IPL campaign in style.

Miller was mostly a spectator in this match-winning stand with Maxwell, who punished spinners as much as the pacers.

The Australian even did not spare Pune's most impressive bowler Imran Tahir, hitting him for consecutive sixes in the 16th over that virtually sealed the match in Kings XI's favour.

Earlier, after the fall of the top order that left Pune at 49 for three in the ninth over, Stokes showed why he commanded a Rs 14.5 crore price at the auction. He got good support from Manoj Tiwary.

SCORES IN BRIEF
PUNE: 163 for 6 in 20 overs (Stokes 50, Tiwary 40 not out; Sandeep 2-33)

PUNJAB: 164 for 4 in 19 overs (Maxwell 44 not out, Miller 30 not out; Tahir 2-29)

Result: Punjab won by 6 wickets.
Player-of-the-match: GJ Maxwell.

Nikki Lauda's losing bet

AFP, Shanghai

Mercedes chairman Nikki Lauda bet against his team grabbing the pole position on Saturday for the Chinese Grand Prix, but it was a 10-euro wager he was happy to lose.

Speaking to reporters, team boss Toto Wolff pulled out a 10-euro note that he won from the Austrian racing legend -- now a Mercedes part-owner -- after their star driver Lewis Hamilton seized the pole in Shanghai.

"I think he was happy about losing the bet. But generally Nikki Lauda is not happy about losing money overall," Wolff said, prompting laughs.

"I think he thought, either I win money or I am happy about being on pole. So it was a win-win situation for him." "I said 'give me the 10 Euros. I will spend it all tonight.'"

Mercedes, the defending constructors' champions, hope to avenge the surprise defeat handed to Hamilton by Sebastian Vettel and Ferrari in the season opener in Melbourne.

Lauda earlier told Sky Sports that he bet on Vettel for the pole because "he really looked quick in the car, everything was right."

"But Lewis, thank God, pulled out one of his special laps," he was quoted saying.

Finest Caribbean one-day moment

STAR SPORT DESK

If you are a West Indian fan and took the trouble of staying up late in front of your television in the early hours on Saturday, it was worth the time. It is for the fact that a non-descript West Indies side have done something extraordinary that their big name predecessors or the current high-profile cricketers, presently featuring in the money-spinning IPL, had not done it before.

They toppled Pakistan's 308 to win the first one-day international by four wickets at the National Stadium in Guyana and thus created a small piece of history. The successful chase meant that the Caribbeans, now languishing at number nine in the one-day rankings, topped a 300-plus target for the first time ever following previous 31 failed attempts over a 44-year period.

Jason Mohammed was the hero of the match with a scintillating unbeaten 91 off 58 balls as the home side reached the target with an over to spare. The right-hander came into the match on the back of three consecutive half centuries. But his fourth one was special. He turned the tide when Pakistan, with a high-profile bowling line-up which was bolstered by the introduction of sensational young leg-spinner Shadab Khan, appeared to have been running away with a victory.

Mohammed may be small in stature; he may not be muscular. But his clean-hitting against the likes of Mohammad Amir and Wahab Riaz was something to behold. He kept the scoreboard ticking when wickets fell at the other end. The decisive flip in the match came when Ashley Nurse walked in to the middle after the departure of West Indies captain Jason Holder, who perished at long-off while trying to hit Shadab out of the ground for a second successive six.

That was a situation from where West Indies have lost so many games before. But with 49 required off 33 deliveries and Mohammed hitting the length ball to the distance or smashing an Amir bouncer for six over long-on, Nurse

turned the fear into the Pakistan camp when he picked up a leg-spinner from Shadab outside the off-stump for a massive six over mid-wicket. It was also a game when Mohammed-Nurse pair shunned the flamboyance as the equation came down to 17-off 15 balls.

Mohammed struck 11 fours and three sixes in his magnificent knock while Nurse's explosive 15-ball 34 contained five fours and six.

"I knew it was going to be difficult against Shadab," Mohammed said after receiving the man of the match award.

"I decided to go after the fast bowlers and where to hit them. That clear thinking paid off today."

Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed said he was disappointed with the way they bowled at the end, reflecting on the first time Pakistan have

failed to defend a total in excess of 300 outside of sub-continent.

"Jason batted brilliantly but we need to come back stronger for the second match on Sunday," Sarfraz said.

Both teams are battling for important ranking points to confirm automatic qualification for the 2019 World Cup in England as one of the top eight teams by the cut-off date of September 30 this year.

SCORES IN BRIEF

PAKISTAN: 308 for 5 in 50 overs (Shehzad 67, Hafeez 88, Malik 53; Holder 1-58, Nurse 4-62)

WEST INDIES: 309 for 6 in 49 overs (Powell 61, Mohammed 91 not out, Nurse 34 not out; Amir 2-59, Khan 2-52)

Result: West Indies won by 4 wickets.



The architects of the West Indies' record-breaking win, Jason Mohammed and Ashley Nurse, take off in celebration after the winning runs against Pakistan in the first ODI on Friday.

PHOTO: AFP