

ODI

Answer lies in pre-injury methods

BISHWAIT ROY

Mustafizur Rahman had disturbing figures of 6-0-53-0 against India in the semifinal of the ICC Champions Trophy. It was not just the figures that were concerning, as a bowler can have a bad day, but it was his tendency to be full-ish on off-stump that was the main cause of concern. The left-arm pacer from Sathkha was out of this world on his arrival to international cricket, but he was nowhere near that mastery during the ICC Champions Trophy. Since his return from shoulder surgery, the young pacerman had some good performances under his belt, especially his sublime bowling in the Test series in Sri Lanka, but still many are being searching for that old Mustafizur who baffled the batsmen with his cutters and slower balls, especially in ODI cricket. Does the problem lie in him losing his mastery post-injury? Or is it that opponents can now read him well? Or did the conditions in England hinder his success?



The two images, one from 2015 (L) and one from 2017 (R), show the change in position in Bangladeshi pacer Mustafizur Rahman's delivery stride, which some local coaches have identified as a reason for his troubles post-surgery.

some common observations about the decline. They have identified the problem in technique and a lack of patience in the bowler, rather than blaming the conditions or injury, and suggested that it is the perfect time for the young prodigy to work on many aspects of his bowling to rediscover success at international level.

problem in the point and angle of release. Young coach Salahuddin, who is a mentor to many national cricketers, found the problem in his line and length and he also said that the patience required to be successful in England was lacking in Mustafizur.

away from where he was before injury. In my opinion he lost effectiveness only because of changing the position of his delivery stride when releasing the ball," said Nazmul Abedin.

Veteran coaches Nazmul Abedin and Sarwar Imran identified a major

"We have high expectations of him. You should say that he was too bad since he has been returning in injury. But what I want to say is that he is now far

that he bowled stump to stump, and that

made his cutters and slower more dangerous. But now, going wide of the crease takes the leg-before out of contention for right-handers and also, if he bowls it on off stump, the batsman knows that the ball will miss the stumps because of the angle."

Sarwar Imran echoed the sentiment. "Earlier he was closer to the stumps but now he is away from the stumps -- that makes the difference. Because of that he didn't find the right areas, because of which the batsmen have no fear about playing short. He should find his old release point, otherwise I am sure he will not be that effective even in home conditions."

"Another thing is that he cannot bring the ball back [into the right-handers]. He will have to improve his bowling and add more things like the length ball," he added.

Salahuddin said that the bowler should understand that he will need to improve a lot. "Pakistan's Hasan Ali was successful because he maintained the right length and bowled in the right areas, which was not the case for Mustafizur. I think he lacks the experience or the knowledge to be patient and maintain the basics in different conditions. I don't think he has to do many things; rather he has to stick to his strengths."

One thing the three experts agreed on is that the Champions Trophy can be a good lesson for the young pacer.

Champions Trophy to be scrapped?

AFP, London

The Champions Trophy could be scrapped in favour of staging the World Twenty20 every two years, according to International Cricket Council (ICC) chief executive David Richardson.

Pakistan thrashed India by 180 runs to win this year's edition of the Champions Trophy on Sunday, with worldwide television audience of millions watching the final. But some officials believe the eight-team event is now too similar to the World Cup which the ICC has decided should be contested by 10 teams from the 2019 event in England.

India are due to stage the next Champions Trophy in 2021 but Richardson warned Monday that it was by no means certain the event would go ahead, saying future World Twenty20s could feature up to 20 teams.

"What we want to do is differentiate our global events from each other so that they can be stand-alone and create maximum interest every time the event happens," Richardson told reporters. "At this stage, the next Champions Trophy is still scheduled for India in 2021. Whether that gets changed, the consideration has been in to changing to two T20s in a four-year cycle which would mean swapping the Champions Trophy with the World T20."

He added: "The fact is that World T20s do attract a lot of interest, they generate significant revenue for the television companies, but most importantly from our point of view they provide us with an opportunity to give more opportunities to more teams. A 16-team World T20 -- even a 20-team World T20 -- domestically, is something that we would like to look at."

"With a 10-team World Cup we're hoping to increase the competitiveness of matches and the standard of the tournament as a whole. It might not be necessary to continue with two 50-over tournaments going forward," he concluded.

Hero's welcome for returning champs

AFP, Karachi

Hundreds of fans gave Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed a hero's welcome as he arrived home carrying the Champions Trophy early on Tuesday.

Men, women and children packed Karachi airport as Sarfraz returned from England, where Pakistan thrashed arch-rivals India to be crowned surprise winners.

Sarfraz held up the trophy to loud cheers and chants of "Long live Sarfraz!" as a police band played patriotic songs nearby.

"(We) want to thank to Allah and the prayers of the whole nation," Ahmed said in brief comments as he jostled his way through the crowd of well-wishers.

Pakistan's victory by 180 runs on Sunday has sparked widespread celebrations in the country, where cricket is the number one sport.

The win has been a long overdue boost after several years of poor results, particularly in the limited-overs formats.

Sarfraz was showered with bouquets and given a traditional skull cap and an 'ajrak' shawl, which is usually presented as a mark of honour.

Senior local officials also turned up to greet the captain before he was whisked away under escort by police

commandos along with team-mate Rummman Raees.

The celebrations did not end once he reached his residential block in central Karachi, adorned with colourful lights and Pakistan flags, where fans climbed on rooftops and balconies to watch him return.

Sarfraz came out on the balcony with the trophy and showed it to fans, waving and making the victory sign with two fingers as the crowds outside threw rose petals.

"First of all I would like to thank God. I think this is a big victory for the whole Pakistan public," he told



Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed took this selfie with an adoring crowd that came to greet the Pakistan team upon their arrival in the country yesterday after clinching the Champions Trophy.

reporters. "The Pakistan team enjoyed a remarkable turnaround after widespread criticism followed a 124-run drubbing by India in the opening group match."

Pakistan went on to oustplay hosts and trophy favourites England in an eight-wicket semi-final win before their epic final triumph against the Indians.

"All the boys worked very hard, after losing that first match, the way the boys made the comeback is remarkable," said Sarfraz.

Pundits have credited the Pakistan Super League -- the country's Twenty20 franchise tournament, for unearthing next talent such as explosive opener Fakhar Zaman and man of the tournament Hasan Ali.

"This was a young team," Sarfraz said. "Sikhan, Fahim Ashraf -- all new boys and it is very good sign for Pakistan cricket the way Hasan Ali played," he continued. "This was the whole team's effort."

Then he sang a victory jingle about Pakistan's breathtaking win and prompted the crowd with chants of "Long live Pakistan" before finally retiring back inside.

Sammy fears for WI future

AFP, London

Former captain Darren Sammy has warned that leading players will continue to favour playing their trade in the T20 tournament over the 50-over game around the world ahead of representing the West Indies.

West Indies pick players for their international sides only if they feature in that format domestically, something that the likes of Chris Gayle and Marlon Samuels are absent from Test and ODI squads.

"With the current administration I don't see that happening," Sammy told BBC Radio Five Live on Monday. "I can't tell a player not to play in a league when it could make them financially stable, look after their family," the 33-year-old added.

West Indies won the World Twenty20 in 2012 and 2016, but have had little success in their other formats recently.

"The way we structure our cricket, we're not going anywhere," Sammy added. "I'm very scared we will be relegated to playing against Ireland and Scotland. It's very sad for us."

Kumble quits

AGENCIES, New Delhi

Anil Kumble has stepped down on Tuesday as India's chief cricket coach amid speculation of a rift with captain Virat Kohli.

Although none of the BCCI top officials who are in London for the ICC Annual Conference were available for confirmation, it is being widely reported that Kumble has submitted his resignation.

Kumble's decision comes in the wake of reports claiming rifts between him and Kohli, and just two days after India's embarrassing loss to Pakistan in the Champions Trophy final.

His one-year contract expired at the end of the Champions Trophy but he was given the option to travel with the team to the West Indies for the limited overs series beginning on Friday.

A BCCI official said that CEO Rahul Johri had offered Kumble a small extension but he refused.

"BCCI CEO Rahul Johri had offered Kumble a two-week extension till the time there could have more clarity in the matter, but he refused to take it," said the source.

Conference as he is the chairman of the ICC's Cricket Committee, while the team board agreed a flight to Barbados.

The players reportedly waited for Kumble at the airport in England on Monday before leaving for the Caribbean but he never showed up.



The BCCI had invited fresh applications for the post of head coach days before the start of Champions Trophy. Kumble was a direct entry into the coach selection process while the others who applied for the post were Mo Mooly, Richard Pybus and Lanceland Rajput among others.

On the sidelines of the Champions Trophy in the UK, the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), comprising Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman and

Sourav Ganguly, held meetings with Kumble as well as Kohli to sort out the difference between the duo.

It is being widely perceived in the BCCI that in the meeting between Kohli and the CAC, the skipper had made it clear that his relationship with the coach had reached a dead end and was not going to be patched up.

It was only the CAC which had picked Kumble as the coach last year. The team did well under Kumble in the past 12 months, winning Test series in the West Indies before winning at home against New Zealand, England, Bangladesh and Australia.

"We contacted Sehwal during the IPL and asked him to consider applying for the job of India coach. But he won't be the only one applying because we expect other former players to also throw their hats in the ring," a top BCCI official had said earlier.

Apart from Sehwal, Sunrises Hyderabad coach Tom Moody, Englishman Richard Pybus, Afghanistan coach Lalchand Rajput and Dadda Ganesh have applied for the job. News also came in that former Australia pacer Craig McDermott had applied for the job, but wouldn't be eligible for the interview as his application reached the BCCI after the deadline.

WI unchanged for first two ODIs

PTI, Port of Spain

West Indies have named an unchanged 15-man squad, which played a 1-1 draw against Afghanistan in a series earlier this month, for the first two ODIs of the five-match series against India starting June 23.

The hosts will be without premier fast bowler Shannon Gabriel as he is still rehabilitating from an injury that forced him out of the Afghanistan series.

It is an important series for ninth-ranked West Indies, to be led by fast bowler Jason Holder, as only the top-eight teams in the ICC rankings get direct entry into the 2019 World Cup.

If they do not perform well and get points, they will have to go through the qualifiers to make it to the knockout event.

India are world No.3 and come into this series after a runers-up finish at the Champions Trophy. The five-match series will begin on Friday in Trinidad and Tobago.

Wawrinka, Raonic stunned at Queen's

AFP, London

Milos Raonic's Wimbledon preparations suffered a major setback on Tuesday as the world number six crashed to a shock Queen's Club first-round defeat against Australian wildcard Thanasi Kokkinakis.

Raonic, came agonisingly close to a golden summer on grass last year when he reached the Queen's and Wimbledon finals, only to lose to Andy Murray on both occasions.

But the Canadian's hopes of warming up for Wimbledon with another strong showing at Queen's were wrecked by Kokkinakis's stunning 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (10/8) triumph.

Raonic wasn't the only leading seed embarrassed on a baking hot afternoon in West London as world number three Stan Wawrinka was beaten 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 by Spain's Feliciano Lopez in the Swiss star's first match since being thrashed by Rafael Nadal in the French Open final.

Kokkinakis needed a wild card from the tournament organisers to make the Queen's main draw after his ranking plunged to 698 following an abdominal strain that sidelined him for 18 weeks.

Finally fit again, the 21-year-old secured his first Tour level match win on 21 months at 'S-Herogenbosch last week, but even so he surely wouldn't have expected to clinch the best win of his promising career just days later.

Kokkinakis faces Nicolas Mahut or Daniil Medvedev in the last 16.

15 arrested for cheering Pakistan win

AFP, New Delhi

Indian police said Tuesday they have arrested 15 Muslim villagers and charged them with sedition -- punishable by life in prison -- for celebrating Pakistan's victory over India in the Champions Trophy.

The villagers were arrested in the Burhanpur district of Madhya Pradesh state on Monday after police received a complaint that they set off fireworks and shouted slogans following Pakistan's win on Sunday.

"We received a complaint from a local Hindu man who accused them of celebrating after India lost the match," Burhanpur police chief Raja Ram Parthasarathy said.

The accused have also been charged with criminal conspiracy, the officer said, adding that the celebrations continued for hours in the sensitive locality.

The village has a large Muslim population and a history of communal clashes between the communities.

Protests run high over Pakistan's win in India -- particularly when it comes to arch-rival Pakistan. Cricket fans in both countries have been arrested in the past for supporting the rival teams or players.

Around 600 students from India were arrested on sedition charges after they were accused of celebrating Pakistan's victory over India in 2014, while a Pakistani man was arrested for waving an Indian flag after his idol Virat Kohli made a match-winning century last year.

Faf set to miss first England Test

AGENCIES, London

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis looks set to miss the first Test against England at Lord's early next month due to the birth of his first child.

Du Plessis is due to go home to South Africa this week, missing the Twenty20 series against England, and admits he is in a "race to be back" in time for the first Test which starts on July 6.

Du Plessis's wife is due to give birth on the first day of the Test and he has told the South African management that he will be present at the birth.

Hashim Amla is set to lead the side if Du Plessis is not back in time.