

SPORTS



With fireworks in the background, the England and India players walk out onto the pitch for one of the two matches on the opening day of the Women's World Cup in Derby yesterday. India beat England by 35 runs, while New Zealand defeated Sri Lanka by nine wickets in the other match.

PHOTO: ICC

Youth games at the expense of BD Games?

Sports Reporter



The Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) is planning to hold the maiden Youth Bangladesh Games, as part of the new committee's election pledge. Regarding the Bangladesh Games which was supposed to be held this year.

The BOA hosted the eighth edition of the Bangladesh Games in 2013, after an 11-year gap, bringing a much-needed boost to the country's sports. As it is a quadrennial event, the ninth edition was supposed to be held this year. But the national Olympic body is now busy chalking out plans for the Youth Games, a pledge which was made during the elections held in April this year.

The BOA secretary general Syed Shahed Reza had announced that they would hold the youth games this year after failing to hold it during the previous four-year term. The organisation has already done some groundwork regarding the event.

"We promised that we would hold the Youth Games this year," BOA's deputy secretary general Ashikur Rahman Mikus said.

"We took the charge of the committee just two years ago which is why it's not possible for us to hold the senior meet this year. After organising the youth meet, we will certainly go for the senior meet," Mikus added.

The BOA spokesman said they wanted to start the Youth Games (U-18 age group) in November with a zonal round while the final round will be held at Dhaka in March next year.

"The meet is supposed to start at district level with all upazillas covered, before the competition advances into the divisional level. The best athletes of the divisional level would compete in the final round."

"Before fixing the starting date we have to consider the final exams of schools and colleges because under-18 athletes will take part in the meet," Mikus said.

Last year the National Sports Council successfully organised a nationwide talent hunt programme from the grassroots level with 32 sports federations getting a group of talented under-16 athletes from this initiative. The BOA wants to cash in on that initiative by holding the youth games.

"The Youth Games would become a stage for those talented athletes to show their potential," Mikus said.

The BOA will also select the best athletes in every discipline for long-term training facilities under their respective federations.

The tentative budget for the games is around Tk 20 crore, and a spokesman said they will collect the fund from sponsors.

"We have already submitted a letter to the ministry of youth and sports for financial support, but we have to collect the major portion of the budget selling sponsorship rights," another deputy secretary general of BOA, Asaduzzaman Kohinur, said.

"We hope we would arrange the sponsors for the meet," he added.

Ford quits as SL coach

Reuters, Colombo

Sri Lanka coach Graham Ford has stepped down after 15 months in his second stint with the team, the cricket board announced on Saturday.

South African Ford, who first coached Sri Lanka between 2012 and 2014, rejoined the team in February last year, signing a contract until the 2019 World Cup.

The 56-year-old led the team to memorable test and Twenty20 series wins over Australia but Sri Lanka's performance this year has been inconsistent with the team suffering their first ever test loss to Bangladesh and a whitewash to South Africa.

"They could not make the semifinals of this month's Champions' Trophy either."

"It's been a privilege to work with these talented young men over the past 15 months. Their passion for the sport is inspiring, as is indeed this nation's," Ford said.

"I wish Sri Lanka Cricket and the boys the very best, and I must offer a word of advice to the young men - Always believe in yourself, believe in your team, and play from your heart."

Sri Lanka host Zimbabwe in a five-match one day international series starting on Friday.

Broad hopes to return for SA Tests

Reuters, London

England's Stuart Broad is hoping to be fit for the first Test against South Africa but the recovering paceman would first like to see if he can send down 10 overs for Nottinghamshire in the Royal London One-Day Cup final against Surrey on July 1.

Broad left the field with a heel injury after bowling one over in Nottingham's win over Leicestershire last Wednesday and was ruled of Monday's match against Kent.

"There are signs of a little bit of a tear on the pad of the heel but I have no pain when I walk or run," Broad was quoted as saying by the Times newspaper. "There is a little bit of pain when I slam my foot front down."

"I am looking to bowl the next week and I'll can then get through ten overs in a one-day final then I suggest I will be fit for the first Test [on July 6]."

Umpire's call won't cost a review

One of many changes approved by ICC

Star Sport Desk



The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday approved a number of proposed changes to rules of the game at its meeting in London.

The changes, including the new run-out rule, restrictions on bat sizes and red cards to send players off for on-field misconduct, were approved by the game's governing body's chief executives committee.

There was also a big change to the Decision Review System (DRS). From October 1, if an LBW decision is decided by the umpire's call, then it will not cost teams a review. However, this also led to another decision that reviews should not be topped up after 80 overs in Test matches. It was also decided that DRS would not be used in the T20I format as well.

The committee also agreed on minimum standards for the use of DRS in international cricket, with mandatory use of ball-tracking and edge-detection technology.

In order to restore the balance between bat and ball, the ICC approved recommendations relating to bat sizes. The MCC's cricket committee, which met in Mumbai last December, had set the limits to 108mm in width, 67mm in depth and 40mm at the edge.

Umpires will also now have a significant role to play as they can now, as in football, send players off the field for serious incidents of misconduct.

"All members," the ICC said, "had agreed to implement this in full."

The new run-out rule means that batsmen will be ruled to have made their ground if their bat bounces after being grounded behind the crease.

THE CHANGES

UMPIRE'S CALL WON'T USE DRS

If a review is decided using the umpire's call, then it will not use up a review. In light of that, the 80-over top-up of reviews in Tests is also being scrapped.

DRS IN T20IS

DRS will be used in all T20I games from now on.

BAT SIZE RESTRICTIONS

The ICC approved recommendations from the MCC to set bat dimensions to 108mm in width, 67mm in depth and 40mm at the edge.

PUNISHMENT FOR ON-FIELD MISCONDUCT

As in football, umpires will now be vested with the power to send players off the field for serious incidents of misconduct.

RUN-OUT RULE CHANGE

Batsmen will be ruled to have made their ground if their bat bounces after being grounded behind the crease.

Aus to simulate BD conditions in Darwin

AGencies, Canberra



Australia have finalised preparations for their next Test assignment, announcing yesterday that they will complete a week-long camp in Darwin ahead of their Qantas Tour of Bangladesh in August.

Australia will embark on a seven-day training camp from August 10 which will include a three-day intra-squad match on August 14 at Marrara Cricket Ground.

Australia's squad for the two-Test tour of Bangladesh - which currently features 13 players but selectors are expected to add a fast-bowler following the Australia A tour of South Africa next month - will depart for Dhaka on August 18.

The two Australia A one-day squad members as it stands who have also been named in the Bangladesh touring party, Hilton Cartwright and Ashton Agar, will link up with the Test squad in Darwin on August 12.

"We're extremely grateful to the support received from the northern territory government and NT Cricket for assisting in facilitating this camp ahead of our test tour of Bangladesh," Cricket Australia's test performance manager Pat Howard said. "Darwin will provide the ideal acclimatisation ahead of the tour and the facilities at Marrara are first-class."

"We're working closely with NT Cricket to replicate conditions in Bangladesh, as we did in Dubai for the Indian Test tour earlier this year, so the squad gets the best preparation possible before departing from Darwin directly to Bangladesh."

Darwin's tropical climate means the cricket season there through the southern hemisphere's off-season, making it ideal for training and matches during winter months.

"We can offer a valuable preparation environment and simulate similar conditions to those the team will face during their tour of Bangladesh in late August, which will be of great benefit to everyone."

After departing the Top End, Australia's first hit out of their Bangladesh tour will be a two-day warm-up match in Fatullah. The first Test begins in Dhaka on August 27 and the second Test starts in Chittagong on September 4.

The series will be Australia's first Test tour of the dense Asian nation since 2006, when first watchman Jason Gillespie famously scored a double-century in his final Test.

ICC wants to send World XI to Pakistan

AP, London

Plans for the full resumption of international cricket in Pakistan moved forward Friday when the sport's global governing body said it wanted to send a World XI to the country later this year.

With the exception of Zimbabwe's tour two years ago, Pakistan have had to play all their 'home' matches outside of the country since a 2009 terror attack on Sri Lanka's team bus in Lahore.

But Friday saw the ICC, following the conclusion of its annual meeting in London, announce that plans for a World XI to play in Pakistan later this year were "continuing to be developed."

The ICC board said it had agreed to support a three-game T20 series in a bid to help revive international cricket in the country.

All the matches would take place in Lahore and be accorded full Twenty20 status, the ICC said, adding "further details will be announced in due course."

"We're scheduled to have a World XI in Pakistan in September for three Twenty20 games," Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur said last week. "So hopefully that starts paving the way for future tours. We can only hope."

Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed added: "I hope this will boost Pakistan cricket and all the [major] playing nations will come to Pakistan."



South Africa players celebrate after taking the last English wicket to pull off a stunning three-run win to level the T20I series at one apiece at Taunton on Friday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Proteas pull level after thriller

Reuters, Taunton



Andile Phehlukwayo delivered a superb final over as South Africa beat England by three runs in a thrilling Twenty20 international at Taunton on Friday.

South Africa made 174 for eight with JJ Smuts contributing 45 and skipper AB de Villiers striking 46 from 30 balls.

England will feel they should have won after being well-placed but they struggled in the closing overs after losing top scorer Jason Roy.

Openers Roy, who had been struggling for form, led the run chase with a fine 67 before he was given out for obstructing the field when scampering back to his crease, having been sent back by partner Liam Livingstone.

Roy ran across the pitch, placing himself between the fielder and the wicket and Phehlukwayo's return struck his leg, leading to the appeal, which was backed by the umpire's after video review.

Roy had shared a 110-run second-wicket partnership with Jonny Bairstow (47) but with 29 needed to win off the final three overs, England fell short.

The hosts required 12 from the final over but Phehlukwayo, bowling Yorker length outside the off stump, restricted England to singles off the first three

balls and debutant Livingstone was run out after confusion over a second ball.

Liam Dawson smashed the penultimate ball for a one-bounce four but the final delivery from the South African seamer beat Dawson and the tourists levelled the three-match series at 1-1.

It had been a strong bowling performance from South Africa with seamer Chris Morris, who removed the dangerous Bairstow after picking up opener Sam Billings early, providing pace and fire in his spell of 2-18 from four overs.

It was an entertaining game for the Somerset crowd, enjoying the first international contest at their ground since the 1999 World Cup.