

I don't play for Naib or ACB: Rashid

PTI, London

"People forget 10 good days and conveniently remember that one particular bad day", says Rashid Khan of the criticism that came his way after he recorded the World Cup's worst bowling figures in a forgettable outing against England.

Used to being showered with accolades for game-changing performances, the ignominy of recording World Cup's worst-ever bowling performance (9-0-110-0), against England, has been a humbling experience for the world's top spinner.

"I am not thinking too much about that match. People forget 10 good days and conveniently remember that one particular bad day. They don't like to remember what Rashid did on previous 10 days," Rashid, the world's number three bowler in ODIs, told PTI.

"I will focus on the mistakes I made in that match and rectify them in the coming matches. No point thinking about criticism. I need to keep things simple," added the 20-year-old.

Asked if his relationship with skipper Gulbadin Naib had been strained after he voiced his displeasure at a change of captaincy, Rashid said: "Neither do I play for Gulbadin nor for the cricket board. I play for the flag, for Afghanistan. I know what my job is and I will continue doing that."

Rashid and Afghanistan's other superstar Mohammed Nabi had raised objections when Gulbadin replaced Asghar Afghan as captain for the World Cup, something that didn't go well with the country's cricket board.

Following five losses, many conspiracy theories abound, including Rashid's relationship with Naib.

"I think there is no problem in my relationship with Gulbadin. I support him as much as I did when Asghar was the captain. If I supported Asghar 50 per cent on the field, Gulbadin has my 100 per cent support," he said.

"Right from time we landed in England, no one has spoken about the issue. I think it was blown out of proportion by the media. Some of us have been playing together for 15-16 years. So if nothing has happened in more than decade, then what can suddenly change in a day or two?"



Ben Stokes hit a defiant unbeaten 82 off 89 balls, including seven fours and four sixes, to get a decimated England within sight of their target, but he could not pull them over the line as No. 11 batsman Mark Wood fell at the other end off the final ball of the 47th over, causing celebrations to erupt on the other side. PHOTO: AFP

Roy eyeing Australia return

AFP, Leeds

England's Jason Roy remains optimistic he will be able to return to World Cup action against Australia despite a hamstring injury that is being managed "day by day".

The dynamic Surrey opener tore the muscle while fielding in England's group win over the West Indies and has been ruled out for at least two games including Friday's match with Sri Lanka at Headingley.

Roy was advised against batting during a brief net practice at Yorkshire's headquarters on Thursday.

Although he is keen to face arch rivals Australia at Lord's on Tuesday, an England side bidding to win the World Cup for the



first time may well decide against risking Roy given they are already on course to reach the semi-finals. "I'm working extremely hard. I've now got two days off and I'll have scan in a couple of days to make sure everything is going in the right direction," Roy told BBC

Radio's Test Match Special during England's match against Sri Lanka on Friday.

"It's healing pretty well. It's all good news. At the moment, I'm still trying to be fit for Australia, and then it's got to go game by game.

"It can't be 'I'll definitely be back for this game or that game', it's something that we have to manage day by day."

Roy hit a fifty in England's opening win over South Africa and then struck a commanding 153 in the host nation's victory over Bangladesh.

"We have the semi-finals and the final and all of that to play for," he said. "If you look at it game by game, you can get frustrated, but I don't do that."

Maxwell relishing clash with England pacers

AFP, Nottingham

Glenn Maxwell reckons Australia have no need to fear England fast bowlers Jofra Archer and Mark Wood at the World Cup given they face Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins in the nets.

The old rivals meet at Lord's on Tuesday. Archer has taken 12 World Cup wickets so far, with Maxwell acknowledging the Barbados-born quick's "effortless pace". But the Australia all-rounder believes the reigning champions' top order will be more comfortable facing fast bowling than anything else at this World Cup.

"I think they'll be more excited by that (Archer and Wood's speed) than someone bowling 120s (kph)," Maxwell said.

"That sort of pace suits our batting

line-up a bit more -- a bit more pace and something we're a bit more used to.

"It's a challenge we're up for," he added. "We certainly get enough practice in the nets, that's for sure."

But ahead of England's group game against Sri Lanka at Headingley on Friday, an admiring Maxwell hailed Archer as a "hell of an athlete" and a "quality package".

Maxwell was speaking after Australia beat Bangladesh by 48 runs to go top of the table in the 10-team round-robin group phase of the World Cup.

Australia ultimately proved too much for the Tigers after compiling a total of 381-5 at Trent Bridge on Thursday, with David Warner's 166 seeing him become this tournament's leading run-scorer.

WI should learn from Kane: Lloyd

AFP, Manchester

Clive Lloyd says the West Indies should learn the art of adaptability from New Zealand captain Kane Williamson as they fight to avoid World Cup elimination.

Jason Holder's side have managed only one win from five matches ahead of Friday's game against New Zealand in Manchester. The Black Caps, unbeaten so far, are fresh from a four-wicket win over South Africa when Williamson made an unbeaten 106.

"The West Indies need to raise their game if they are to have a chance against New Zealand at Old Trafford on Saturday," Lloyd wrote in his column for the ICC.

"In Kane Williamson, the Black Caps have a terrific captain and an even more impressive batsman. His innings to knock off South Africa was absolutely masterful, one of the finest I have ever seen in an ODI game. He is a fantastic reader of the game and knows how to adapt to what is going on around him."

"The West Indies would benefit from learning a thing or two from Williamson."

West Indies started the tournament by beating Pakistan in their opener but soon lost momentum with defeats against Australia, England and Bangladesh.

Lloyd feels West Indies' loss to Bangladesh at Taunton early this week was especially frustrating.

"I was disappointed with the West Indies performance against Bangladesh. It would appear that they only have one way to play with no variation to their game plan," said Lloyd.

"They are trying to blast people out and I don't think they understand the English conditions.

"You cannot always do that here because the pitches during this competition has been batsman friendly despite the rain. It might be green but it doesn't always fly around."

However, Lloyd still has high hopes for top order batsmen Evin Lewis and Shai Hope, both of whom scored half-centuries against Bangladesh.

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I think he's a legend. He know what he has to do, I think. He just keep doing what he knows, that is the main thing, those basic things. Those things we want to set as example for the young-sters. So I think he did really good job and even Angelo, both of them did a really good job. Those are the performances of changing the games.

Angelo Mathews
Sri Lanka captain



Veteran batsman Angelo Mathews dug deep and scored a gritty 85 runs off 115 balls, hitting five fours in his knock, to steady Sri Lanka's rocky ship after a top-order collapse early into their innings. The 32-year-old's efforts helped the side finish their allotted overs on 232 for nine, a target which proved just enough to be defended on the back of some brilliant bowling. PHOTO: REUTERS

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Despite posting a modest target of 233 runs against England, Sri Lanka staged a brilliant fight back with the ball yesterday. After losing two early wickets as both openers -- James Vince and Jonny Bairstow -- departed, Joe Root and English skipper Eoin Morgan held the ship for the hosts until Isuru Udana took a stunning return catch to dismiss the centurion of the previous game for England. It was in the fourth ball of the 19th over when Morgan struck an uppish drive to a low full-toss from Udana which was travelling towards his right side as the left arm seamer who had very little reaction time to take the catch brilliantly grabbed the ball with his both hands to dismiss the danger man.