

The Island Sports

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It's a two horse race

**Rex Clementine
reporting from Adelaide**

Following Australia's win against India in the Commonwealth Bank Series here in Adelaide on Sunday, the hosts are clear of the two Asian nations in the competition with a total of 17 points, while both India (9) and Sri Lanka (6) are yet to get to double figures.

The result means Sri Lanka will have to now compete with India to qualify for the best of three finals.

After taking their minds off from the terrible start to the competition, the Sri Lankans trained at the Adelaide Oval Monday morning.

"Now it's similar to a two horse race to get into the finals.

Australia have gone quite a distance from the other two teams and it's up to us to make sure that we get there," Sri Lanka's captain Mahela Jayawardene told *The Island* on Monday.

"We've been inconsistent with the bat this series. I thought the bowlers have lifted the mark, but we haven't batted well at all. We beat India in one game and if we get things right,

captain Arjuna Ranatunga almost walked out in protest in 1999, after star spinner Muttiah Muralitharan was called by umpire Ross Emerson during an ODI against England.

It is also venue for the verbal confrontation between Darren Gough and Roshan Mahanama and later England captain Alec Stewart barging onto the Sri Lankan during their run chase. As it's generally the rule with the Match Referees, the white man went unpunished.

Muralitharan finished off a tense game scoring the winning runs as Sri Lanka successfully chased 303 runs with a wicket and two balls to spare, but the man, the boy rather, who laid the foundation for that win was Jayawardene himself, who had

experienced seniors around. Everything that took place on the field wasn't a big issue for me as I wasn't dealing with that. My job was to go out there and bat and I managed to get a good start and the win was very sweet, especially with Murali hitting the winning runs in a very controversial game," Jayawardene recalled.

Apart from recalling fond memories, he was also quick to point out that Sri Lanka need to bounce back hard. A win here is a must for them as otherwise with the two opponents well ahead, Sri Lanka will be left to play catch up.

Jayawardene admitted that

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just turned 21 then.

"Plenty of happy memories for me here. This is where my career kick started when I got that hundred earlier on in my

Australia haven't played good cricket during the ODIs this summer, but rued at not grabbing the initiative and putting the opposition under pressure.



Mahela Ja

the positives out of those games and try and make sure we focus on getting to the final," he said.

The tourists also want to