



Bedi excited with Mendis' talent

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# The Island Sports

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# Petes and Patana in President's Cup final

by Fazal Mohamed

Ispatana overcame some anxious moments to beat St. Anthony's College, Katugastota 27 points to 24 in the inter-schools knock out tournament's semi-final worked off at the Royal College Sports Complex yesterday. Despite the win, Ispatana will not be satisfied with the brand of rugby they exhibited as they fumbled and let down many opportunities that came their way.

St. Anthony's opened scoring in the very first minute through a penalty that came from the boots of fly half Mohamed Reyal. He did the bulk of the work for St. Anthony's throughout the match with an outstanding display of rugby but was let down by his team mates, who did not match up to the standards of the opposition. The boys from Havelock Park scored in the 7th minute through a try, a superb break by Vishwajith Wijesinghe, who off loaded the ball only to have Suranga Uthpala touching



down. The conversion was successful.

Reyal then put over another penalty to close the gap and the score was 6-7 in favour of the Patanians. Patana forwards kept dominating the rucks and mauls, but were held back by the spirited Antonian defence. The Antonians broke the shackles courtesy of a drop goal fired by centre Tharanga Bandara in the 34th minute.

At the turn around, the score read 9-7 in favour of the Antonians. After the short whistle, the Patanians played some fast rugby often leaving their opponents surprised with some



There were plenty of tries in yesterday's inter-school Milo President's Cup rugby semi-final and here a St. Peter's player plants yet another try against Mahanama College. Defending champions St. Peter's won 60-0 and will meet Ispatana College in the grand final on Saturday. Pic by Nishan S. Priyantha.

dazzling runs, but they failed to add the final touches often losing the ball at pivotal moments.

On the contrary, the Antonians took most of the opportunities presented to them and opened scoring. Reyal got the scoreboard ticking again with his powerful kicks and St. Anthony's score was boosted again when Bandara scored a try in the 51st minute.

Then came the Patana onslaught started on the 54th minute. The first of the tries came through Vishwajith Jayasinghe, whose try went unconverted. The second try came courtesy of Srinath Sooriyabandara, who brushed away the Antonian defence with some superb stepping and ran over 35 meters to touch down.

Anuruddha Srinath planted down the last try and with that took his side to the finals of the

tournament.

**St. Peter's cruise to final**  
St. Peter's, the defending champions, seem to have had a cakewalk in the tournament so far and yesterday they thrashed the hapless Mahanama boys 60 to nothing also at Royal College Sports Complex.

After their convincing win over Nalanda in the quarter-final, the Peterites came up with another splendid effort.

There were expectations for some stiff resistance from the Mahanamians, who were the giant killers in the league but the semi-final encounter yesterday was a one-sided affair.

St. Peter's included fly half Harsha Weerakkody and Ishan Noor, who were rested for the quarter-final starting line up and the Mahanamians could only

hold sway in the first five minutes of the match as the Peterites took complete control of the proceedings from thereon.

St. Peter's took an early lead and were sitting pretty with the scoreboard reading 29-0 in the first half. The second half too was completely one-sided as the Peterites mauled the Mahanamians with some breathtaking runs and some dazzling off loads. Dilshan Paul touched down twice while Ruwan Dharmathilake, Poornaka Delpachithra, Gerad Canute, Rukshan Fernando, Shenal Dias and Harsha Weerakkody joined the party touching down at will.

The Peterites will now meet Ispatana in the final of the tournament scheduled to be worked off at the Royal College Sports Complex this Saturday.

## Cricketers arrive home today



Jayasuriya

Mendis

The national cricket team, that won the Asia Cup, beating India in the final in Karachi, will arrive home today.

The EK 550 flight carrying the Sri Lankan cricketers will land at the Bandaranaike International Airport at 8:50 am.

Veteran batsman Sanath Jayasuriya and rookie bowler Ajantha Mendis starred for the Sri Lankans in the final and throughout the tournament.

While Jayasuriya, a late inclusion in the squad, was the highest run scorer with 378 runs, Mendis won the Man of the Final and Man of Series awards. He finished the series with 17 wickets and took six wickets in the final.

Mendis, a soldier at Sri Lanka Army, has played only a few first class matches and according to SLC coaches, is the first player to represent the country having bypassed the under-19 and Sri Lanka 'A' teams.

## ECB name Sri Lanka as Zimbabwe replacement

As exclusive reported by 'Sunday Island' three days ago, Sri Lanka will replace Zimbabwe as England's first opponents of next summer, the ECB confirmed yesterday.

The England and Wales Cricket Board severed bilateral ties with Zimbabwe Cricket two weeks ago on account of the drastic deterioration of life in the African country under Robert Mugabe's regime.

The ECB have since been looking for replacements to play the two May Tests at Lord's and the Riverside, with Sri Lanka agreeing to step in as England build up for the Ashes later in the summer.

The tourists will also play three NatWest Series one-day internationals and a match against England Lions at Derby.

ECB chief executive David Collier said: "We are delighted that Sri Lanka will tour in the early part of next summer."

### Sri Lanka in England 2009

- The Itinerary**  
April 21-23: Leicestershire (Leicester)  
April 25-27: Essex (Chelmsford)  
April 29-May 3: England Lions (Derby)  
May 7-11: 1st Test (Lord's)  
May 15-19: 2nd Test (Chester-le-Street)  
May 21: Somerset (Taunton)  
May 24: 1st ODI (Bristol)  
May 27: 2nd ODI (Edgbaston)  
May 30: 3rd ODI (Headingley)

## Wimbledon champion Nadal told to rest



Spanish tennis player Rafael Nadal answers journalists, questions on his arrival in Palma Majorca, in the Spanish Balearic Islands, Monday July 7, 2008 one day after he dethroned number one seeded Swiss player Roger Federer in the final of Wimbledon. (AP)

by Perry Crooke

Wimbledon champion Rafael Nadal has been told to rest his injured knee before preparing an assault on Roger Federer's

US Open crown.

The 22-year-old Spaniard, who won an epic five-set thriller against Federer to win his first Wimbledon title, is now out to end the Swiss star's

run of four successive victories at Flushing Meadows and claim the top spot in the rankings of men's tennis.

Federer has been world No 1 in the ATP rankings for a record 232 consecutive weeks but three-times Wimbledon champion Boris Becker said: "Whoever wins the French Open and Wimbledon in the same year for me is the No 1 in the world. The computer just didn't get it yet."

Nadal, who has yet to get past the last eight in New York, pulled out of this week's Stuttgart Cup tournament, saying: "My doctors have said I need rest. I will now get examined for an exact diagnosis. I only want to return to the court once I am 100 per cent fit. My future plan is to relax. I played for the last four or five months without stopping. . . I need to recover. I have to work with my physio and work with my doctor."

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## Dhoni sits out Sri Lanka Tests

MUMBAI (Reuters)

Leading India batsman Sachin Tendulkar will return from injury in the three-test series against Sri Lanka, while wicket-keeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni will sit out the first part of the tour due to fatigue.

Selectors named a 16-member Test squad on Tuesday that was missing limited-overs skipper and test vice-captain Dhoni, who indicated he would like to take a break from the sport after India's loss to Sri Lanka in Sunday's Asia Cup final in Pakistan.

The 27-year-old is expected to return for the five one-dayers that follow the test series starting in Colombo on July 23.

Tendulkar, who has suffered a number of niggling injuries in recent years, has been out of international cricket since he



Dhoni

suffered a groin problem in the first home Test against South Africa in March.

The selectors have also recalled off spinner Harbhajan Singh after he missed the last two one-day series due to a ban for slapping national team

mate Shanthakumaran Sreesanth during a domestic Twenty20 game.

The Tests will be played at SSC (July 23-27), Galle (July 31-Aug 4) and P. Sara (Aug 8-12).

**Test squad for Sri Lanka**  
Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman, Rohit Sharma, Dinesh Karthik (wk), Parthiv Patel (wk), Anil Kumble (capt), Harbhajan Singh, Ishant Sharma, Zaheer Khan, RP Singh, Munaf Patel, Pragyan Ojha.

