



England must fight Australia with fire

two Tests at Cardiff and Lord's could easily be drawn, as the ball won't zip around in July as it did last week. So could the third Test at Edgbaston, where only three championship games since 2006 have ended in a definite result, although the Test pitch tends to produce one. England could have staked all on winning there or at Headingley, and holding on at the

batting fell apart when England gained some revenge for being dismissed for 51 in Jamaica by taking their last eight wickets for 53. West Indies turned up at Lord's, but only in a bodily sense. They were loose of technique and mind. Devon Smith is still opening after scoring one Test fifty since November 2005. On Saturday, the supposed fourth day, the ground was empty and MCC lost at least £180,000. But the England and Wales Cricket Board are not missing out. The Test started unprecedentedly early - the first Wednesday in May! - because they have shoehorned into this summer the International Cricket Council World Twenty20, with the attendant profits, and not cut anything to make space. Yesterday the ECB said this would not be the last Test to start on a Wednesday. It was when the sun came out on Friday afternoon and an Australian batsman got stuck in - an Australian not good enough to command a regular place in Queensland's side - the first Test became a different game. Brendan Nash added 143 with Denesh Ramdin; England's bowling, as Strauss admitted, became less disciplined; England dropped two catches, their only two misses of the match; the ball stopped swinging conventionally, and the square was too immaculately grassed to allow reverse-swing; and while Prior has the energy, and many other virtues, his keeping does not have the polish to lift his side in flat periods. Australia's batting, even if it has been shorn of a few stars, is going to have as much depth as any Ashes side they have ever fielded, with Johnson - an all-rounder in the making - probably at No 9. England, without an outstanding bowler of their own, are not going to be able to stop them making some big totals. And the only way of hanging on in the series will be to reply, massively, in kind. The Ashes series this summer might be marred by England's failure to regain the urn, but not by the referral system in umpiring decisions. When the ICC's cricket committee meet on Monday and Tuesday at Lord's, they are expected to recommend further trials and improvements in the use of technology in the referral system, not its immediate adoption. After their last series in the Caribbean, both England and West Indies felt dissatisfied with the system of player referrals, with a maximum of two unsuccessful appeals for each side per innings. The quality of the personnel who did the on-field umpiring and the television reviews was low, in addition to the imperfections of the system. **Telegraph**

If England are to win back the Ashes, the fitness of Andrew Flintoff will be a key factor.

by Scyld Berry

England's team for the first Test against Australia at Cardiff on July 8, barring injuries and flooding by the River Taff, will be as follows: A Strauss, A Cook, R Bopara, K Pietersen, P Collingwood, M Prior, A Flintoff, S Broad, G Swann, J Anderson and M Panesar. Twelfth man: G Onions or R Sidebottom.

There is a lot to be said for such a team. Only five specialist batsmen, but the next four could at least claim to be all-rounders. An attack of five top-line bowlers, featuring three bowlers who can clock 90mph and two contrasting spinners, and a good fielding side if the ball does not go to Monty Panesar too often.

No less importantly, it will be a team full of freshness, youth, and resilience insofar as a 5-0 beating in the last Ashes series allows. There is no obvious personality for the Australians to pick on for "mental disintegration" as they love to call it, whereas most England teams have had a weak link in recent Ashes series, and the chain has quickly broken.

This team will give it as well as take. It is not in Andrew Strauss's nature to start the sledging, but Paul Collingwood is an able deputy, while Strauss on the field now has his two mastiffs beside him, James Anderson and Stuart Broad, baby-faces in appearance alone. The chemistry overall seems right with the introduction of Graeme Swann's quirky, exhibitionist humour to lighten the mood and send up or isolate any attempt by Andrew Flintoff to start a counter-culture.

Strauss and England's new coach Andy Flower have done everything they reasonably could have in the short time allotted to them. They have a clear vision of what Plan A should be: to take 20 Australian wickets, which England have done once on average in recent Ashes series, by means of spin and both sorts of swing. England - this New England set-up, which was only allowed a free hand for the first time last week - should be given all of their supporters' encouragement.

The trouble is that, as a result of being given only a couple of

months to implement their Ashes plans, England will have no tried and tested Plan B in reserve. England's strategy for this summer is similar to 2005, with more emphasis on spin this time as Australia have none of their own. But, before then, England have always regained the Ashes at home in one of two distinct ways.

Firstly, when England have had the outstanding bowler in the series: Ian Botham in 1985 and 1981, Bob Willis in 1977, Jim Laker in 1956. On those occasions England won with relative ease. But they do not, as the teams stand, possess the outstanding bowler: if anyone merits the term in advance, it is Australia's fast, left-arm bowler who now swings the new ball and reverse-swings the old ball, Mitchell Johnson.

Secondly, a long rearguard defensive action enabled England to regain the Ashes in 1953 and 1926, by the smallest of 1-0 margins after winning the fifth Test at the Oval, and it would have been good if they had the same option now for Plan B. If England packed their side with six batsmen, the first

Oval.

Bringing back Ian Bell (Michael Vaughan cannot be considered because he has a hamstring injury) as a sixth batsman for the second Test against West Indies at Chester-le-Street would allow England to see if they can live with only four bowlers, after omitting Tim Bresnan; but an unchanged party is far more likely when it is announced on Sunday, and an unchanged XI on Thursday. Flower said after the 10-wicket, three-day victory at Lord's: "We liked the balance to our side in the Trinidad Test." Which was when Matt Prior was promoted to No 6, followed by three seamers and two spinners.

West Indies have become abject, however, even in Trinidad when they never aimed higher than a draw. Last week, after competing for the first two sessions, their fielding fell apart when they dropped six catches on Wednesday evening, including Broad four times; then their bowling fell apart first thing on Thursday morning, when they bowled fluffy half-volleys for Swann to hammer; then their

Inter-School U-19 Twenty-20

Jayampathi guides DSS

by Reemus Fernando

Charith Jayampathi impressed with 42 runs (32balls) inclusive of two sixes and three fours for D.S. Senanayake College to record a five wickets victory over Thurstan College in their pre-quarter-final match of the inaugural Inter-School Under-19 Twenty-20 tournament played at Wijerama Mawatha yesterday.

Scores:
Thurstan 91 for 8 (20)
S. Salgado 17, U. Munasinghe 15; Naveen Kavikara 2/14
DSS 96 for 5 (15.2)
Charith Jayampathi 42, Harendra Udugamawithana 13; Indika Massalage 2/15, Prabodha Arthavidu 2/15

Kelumpriya, Buddhika shine in Mahinda victory
Mahinda College, Galle registered a four wicket victory over Zahira College as Sajith Kelumpriya with a quick 25 runs (18 balls 1x6, 3x4s) and Romesh Buddhika with an unbeaten 35 runs (30 balls 3x6s,1x4) excelled in the batting department in their pre-quarter-final played at Ratgama yesterday.

Scores:
Zahira 115 for 9 (20)
Ishan Ibunu 24, Mohamed Hayasim 23, Mohamed Shadir 20; Mayura Dihan 2/28, Romesh Buddhika 2/13, Kaushalya Gajasinghe 2/19
Mahinda 121 for 6 (18.2)
Sajith Kelumpriya 25, Rumesh Buddhika 35 n.o., Kaushalya Gajasinghe 16; Ishan Ibunu 2/23, I. Mohamed 2/24

Cambrians on five wickets
Quickfire knocks down Shehan Dammalage (33 in 17 balls 6x4s), Thisaru de Mel (30 n.o.) and Shehan Jayasuriya (20n.o) helped Prince of Wales College to cruise to a five wicket victory over Trinity College in their pre-quarter-final played at Moratuwa yesterday.

An unbeaten 67 runs from K. Jayasuriya was the highlight in the Trinity innings as they recovered from being 10 for three wickets at one stage to post 119 for four wickets in their allotted 20 overs.

Scores:
Trinity 119 for 4 (20)
K. Jayasuriya 67 n.o., A. Jayasundara 28 n.o., Mohamed Haseem 1/17, Nipun Chamara 1/19
Prince of Wales 121 for 5 (18.2)
Shehan Dammalage 33, Thisaru de Mel 30 n.o., Shehan Jayasuriya 20 n.o.; S. Wickrama 2/23, A. Jayasundara 1/15

Low-key Leipheimer is a contender at Giro

TRIESTE, Italy (AP) - Levi Leipheimer is downplaying his status as a leading contender for the Giro d'Italia title.

"When I stack up against the Italian favorites, I don't think I'm quite the favorite," the 35-year-old American rider said. "There's a lot of guys who are focused on the race and it's their big objective. There's a long list of guys ahead of me."

Leipheimer is the leading rider in the Giro of the Astana team, which also features seven-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong.

Armstrong, who is riding in support of Leipheimer, thinks his teammate is a potential winner of the Italian classic. "I'm bullish on his outlook and his opportunities here, so I like to poke him a little bit, because I think it's good for him," Armstrong said. "He wants to downplay it and sneak into the race, which is smart."

Leipheimer was so guarded about his aspirations, he spent nearly an entire interview with The Associated Press downplaying his chances of victory.

Kingswood top slot, Joes crash to eighth place

by Ravi Nagahawatte

Kingswood College climbed two places to the top spot of the school's rugby points table following their smashing 51-8 win against St. Joseph's College at

Havelock Park on Sunday. The tournament is so fiercely competitive that the defeat sends St. Joseph's crashing three places down to eighth place. Royal, the only other

unbeaten team in the tournament, closely follows Kingswood at second place.

Trinity bounced back from the previous week's defeat at the hands of St. Joseph's to secure third place. Trinity this

week beat St. Anthony's College 49-10.

The other significant changes in the points table are St. Anthony's crashing to the bottom of the points table as the 10th team in the tournament and Dharmaraja

moving four places up to be placed sixth. Dharmaraja vanquished Mahanama 41-10.

Isipathana remains at seventh place despite their convincing 22-12 win against St. Peter's at Bambalapitiya.

Lose series 4-1

SL Under-19 suffer three wicket defeat

Sri Lanka Under-19 suffered a three wicket defeat in the last one-dayer to hand hosts Bangladesh a 4-1 victory in the Youth ODI series that ended in Bangladesh on Saturday.

After Kusal Janith top scored with 52 runs for Sri Lanka Under-19 to post 227, Bangladesh scored the target losing seven wickets with two overs to spare.

Scores:
SL Under-19 227 all out (49.2)
Bhanuka Rajapakse 36, Kusal Janith 52, Chaturanga de Silva 34, Chathura Peiris 30; Abul Hasan 2/27, Mahmudul Hasan 3/32
Bangladesh U-19 228 for 7 (47.5)
Amit Majumder 102, Anamul Haque 38, Sabbir Rahman 37, Taibur Rahman 27n.o.; Chathura Peiris 2/27, Chaturanga de Silva 2/22.

SL Bangladesh move World T-20 warmup

LONDON (AP) - Sri Lanka and Bangladesh have agreed to move their World Twenty20 warmup forward two days to make it part of a two-game fixture more attractive to fans.

The switch means the match will be played on June 2 at Trent Bridge with England's warmup against Scotland scheduled immediately after.

Organizers announced the change Monday, with those fans who had already bought tickets to the original date now entitled to entrance to both games. The tournament starts June 5 with England's match against the Netherlands at Lord's and concludes with the final at the same venue 16 days later.

PRESIDENT'S SCHOOL LEAGUE RUGBY TOURNAMENT 2009

Division I - Group "A" (Week 2)

STD	TEAMS	PLAY	WON	LOST	DRAW	T	C	P	DG	PF	PA	TP
1	Kingswood	2	2	0	0	20	13	2	-	132	18	9
2	Royal	2	2	0	0	12	5	2	-	76	39	9
3	Trinity	2	1	1	0	12	5	-	1	73	33	5.5
4	S. Thomas'	2	1	1	0	8	6	3	0	61	49	5
5	St. Peter's	2	1	1	0	13	4	0	0	73	22	4.5
6	Dharmaraja	2	1	1	0	6	6	0	0	42	71	4.5
7	Isipathana	2	1	1	0	6	2	0	0	34	40	4.5
8	St. Joseph's	2	1	1	0	5	2	2	0	35	75	4.5
9	Mahanama	2	0	2	0	4	0	0	0	20	133	0.0
10	St. Anthony's	2	0	2	0	2	0	1	1	16	88	0.0