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# The Island Sports

Monday 20th July, 2009

by Rex Clementine

After two weeks of confusion and controversy, ace paceman Chaminda Vaas finally announced his retirement from Test cricket during a media briefing at the Sinhalese Sports Club grounds yesterday. Today's third and final Test against Pakistan will be the 35-year-old veteran's last Test Match, but he said he will continue to represent the country in ODIs and Twenty-20s. The third Test against Pakistan will be my last Test Match. It was a very difficult decision, but after speaking to my family I decided to move on. However, I will continue to play ODI and T-20 cricket, the left arm seamer said yesterday.

He added that he will hold a media briefing at the conclusion of the third Test as Sri Lanka are eyeing a whitewash against Pakistan having already bagged the series 2-0.

Vaas was overlooked for the T-20 World Cup in England, but was expected to be recalled for the first Test against Pakistan in Galle. However, he was not named in the 16 member squad announced ahead of the series opener which prompted speculations about his future and Chairman of Selectors Ashantha de Mel surprised many when he went on record saying that the veteran intended to retire from Test cricket. However, Vaas denied making a statement like that to the Chief Selector.

The selectors seemed to have reached a compromise with the former vice-captain when they picked him for the final Test with the series already won so that the veteran could retire on a high note.

The dead rubber at SSC, however, will provide an opportunity for Sri Lankan cricket lovers to reflect on the career of country's most successful fast bowler with over 350 wickets to his name. No other Sri Lankan fast bowler has taken 100 wickets in Tests.

Vaas made his international debut two weeks after his 20th birthday against India in Rajkot and went onto play his first Test Match against Pakistan the same year in Kandy. Two years later he was a key member of the side that went onto win the World Cup in Lahore.

It is a sad day when such a great player goes out of Test cricket. He is a true champion, probably the only Sri Lankan fast bowler we can call a true legend of the game. He stands shoulder to shoulder with the greats of the world cricket, captain Kumar Sangakkara said paying tribute to Vaas.

A devout Catholic and a man who



Chaminda Vaas, right, is greeted by Sri Lankan team baggage boy Nimal, during a practice session ahead of the third Test Match against Pakistan at the SSC grounds on Sunday. Vaas announced he will be retiring from Test cricket after the final Test. (Pic by Gurinder Osan)

## ● Test cricket loses Mr. Nice Guy

# Vaas announces retirement from Tests

enjoyed life to the fullest, Vaas has always maintained that he wasn't the most talented fast bowler to emerge from Sri Lanka, and he got eventually. The greatest thing about Vaasy is that

when I got into the side he was one of the first guys to come and talk to me when I was a reserve in the Pakistan series in 2000. When you think of Vaasy, you remember fitness, strength and class. He worked his butt off over the years to keep such an amount of fitness, Sangakkara, further said about Sri Lanka's second highest wicket taker in both forms of the game.

He is probably the only bowler in the world to bowl on conditions like this and manage to pick up so many wickets. Where spinners usually do well, Vaasy has excelled. Everyone in the team has a great amount of respect for him. He is a true champion, probably the only Sri Lankan fast bowler we can call a true legend of the game.

Two years ago, Vaas became only the third player to play 100 Test Matches for Sri Lanka and his 110 Tests is the second most by a Sri Lankan, a list headed by Muttiah Muralitharan.

The highlights of Vaas' career include a ten wicket match bag in Napier in 1995 as Sri Lanka won its first Test Match overseas. In that series he also excelled with the bat with a couple of half-centuries, but overall underachieved with the bat despite managing a Test hundred.

SSC was also the venue where he picked up eight wickets in an innings, a World Record and the best bowling analysis in ODIs. Critics argued that he could have gone onto pick up all ten wickets, but his captain Sanath Jayasuriya pulled him out of the attack with Zimbabwe down to the tail although he still had two overs left to finish his quota.

Then he picked up a hat-trick off the first three balls of the game in Pietermaritzburg against Bangladesh in the 2003 World Cup, a tournament he finished as the highest wicket taker.

He was appointed as the vice-captain to Marvan Atapattu in 2005, but an ugly infighting triggered by Mahela Jayawardene who ran a campaign through his British agent living in Colombo saw Vaas resigning from the post while on tour in New Zealand and Jayawardene was brought back as vice-captain.

## Sri Lanka wary of 'temperamental' Pakistan

Sri Lanka captain Kumar Sangakkara is wary of a Pakistan comeback in the final Test of the series, acknowledging the visitors' capacity for sharp form turnarounds.

Sri Lanka has an unbeatable 2-0 lead in the three match series, with the final Test starting today at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground.

Pakistan will be both trying to recoup some pride with a win, and to gain some momentum heading into the upcoming one-day series.

Pakistan has always been temperamental as a side, Sangakkara said yesterday. That is what the greatest dangers about them. We don't know what to expect when we walk out on to the field.

The thought always at the back of our heads is that these guys are such a great side, just watch out, one of these days they are going to come back and come back hard at you.

We've just got to be ready and if that happens we absorb the pressure.

Pakistan lost the first two Tests after being in winning positions but collapsing dramatically.

Our mental status is simple, Pakistan captain Younis Khan said. Everybody wants to win, everybody knows that if we play to our potential we deliver all the time.

Younis said he agreed with

Sangakkara's opinion that Pakistan team is unpredictable and worried about its tendency to collapse.

It might become our habit. So we must stop these things specially in Test cricket because in one-dayers or Twenty20 it is manageable. But not in Test cricket.

The Test will be the last in the career of 35-year-old Sri Lanka seamer Chaminda Vaas.

Sri Lanka: (From) Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Malinda Wanayapura, Tharanga Paranavitana, Mahela Jayawardene, Thilan Samaraweera, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Chaminda Vaas, Anjelo Mathews, Chamara Kapugedera, Ajantha Mendis, Thilan Thushara, Nuwan Kulasekera, Rangana Herath, Kaushal Silva, Suranga Lakmal and Damika Prasad.

Pakistan: (From) Younis Khan (captain), Salman Butt, Khurram Manzoor, Mohammad Yousuf, Misbah-ul-Haq, Shoaib Malik, Kamran Akmal, Umar Gul, Saeed Ajmal, Mohammad Aamir, Danish Kaneria, Abdul Razzaq, Abdur Rauf, Fawad Alam and Faisal Iqbal.

## Navy in sensational 18-3 win against CR

by Ravi Nagahawatte

Navy Sports Club created a piece of sensation when they beat the fancied Ceylonese Rugby & Football Club (CR&FC) 18-3 in a closely contested Cup Championship encounter of the Caltex League rugby tournament at Welisara yesterday.

Navy thought and played like a winning team and collected their points through two tries, one conversion, one penalty and a drop goal in response to CR&FC which could manage only a penalty kick at goal.

The winners played with a purpose right from the kick off and did well in the first half despite CR&FC enjoying a larger share of possession.

Navy drew first blood with the game 18 minutes old when fly half Nilufer



Ibrahim followed a kick by Erande Weerakody and took the ball over the try line.

CR's forwards weren't impressive

in the first half and the team's three too found advancing hard, in the face of a solid defence put up by Navy.

CR's Reza Mubarak slotted in a penalty in the 21st minute of play to reduce the deficit in points.

Navy's Samantha Lakshan dropped a goal ten minutes from half time to help his team take the breather with a lead of five points.

Play in the second half was scrappy at times but Navy began dominating the game with their fast running backs.

Full back Nuwan Hettiarachchi shone in attack and made some piecing runs.

Hettiarachchi struck a penalty in the 38th minute of play to make the score 11-3 in favour of Navy.

The sailors had the CR players dumbfounded when Hettiarachchi sliced through their defence and planted the ball close to the posts. Lakshan added the extra points to help Navy avenge the first round defeat to CR.

Navy's Erande Weerakody was handed a yellow card by referee Pradeep Fernando.

Royal's play maker this season Hamza Hassen represented Navy at yesterday's match.



Navy SC's Suranga Pushpakumara makes a break in the team's Cup Championship Trophy match in the Caltex League Rugby tournament against CR&FC which was worked off at Welisara yesterday. Navy SC won the match 18-3.

(Pic by Jude Denzil Pathiraja)

## Under-17 Division I

# Illeperuma shines for DSS

by Reemus Fernando

Leg-spinner Tharindu Illeperuma picked up four wickets for D.S. Senarathne College to restrict Nalanda College to 208 runs and record a 39 runs vic-

tory in their Inter-School Under-17 Division I match played at Nalanda Ground yesterday.

Scores: DSS 247 all out (50) Thusith de Silva 50, Chamod Wickramasinghe 49, Lasith Abeyratne 33; K. Danushka 3/31

Nalanda 208 all out (47.2)

P. Wickramarachchi 60, S. Gunawardena 43; Tharindu Illeperuma 4/40, Akila Weerasinghe 2/26

Trinity record five

