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The Island Sports

Thursday 23rd July, 2009

Sri Lanka miss second spinner

by Richard Browne

On a day of attritional Test cricket at the SSC, Sri Lanka's gamble in playing only one front line spinner was shown as being a mistake, as on the flat-test wicket of the three match series, the four pronged pace attack, was made to look mediocre as the Pakistanis finally grafted out a score that has put them in a match winning position.



Trevor Bayliss

"We lacked a bit of variety out there, a second spinner definitely would have been useful today. I thought the bowling attack looked a bit one dimensional and on a wicket as flat as this the more options you have the harder it is for the opposition," said Sri Lanka coach Trevor Bayliss.

More than the lack of variety in the bowling attack Sri Lanka's failure to build an imposing first innings total lay at the heart of their problems, for it was only a matter of time before a batting side as talented as Pakistan got their act together and punished the flimsiness of the normally reliable Sri Lanka batting line up.

"The boys were really upset with the way they batted yesterday. They have not become bad batsmen overnight and if you look at our batting record over the last couple of years; it is as good as anyone's. To me the players are not out of form, they are just not putting together big scores. I have total faith in them though and even though the wicket will turn more as the game goes on, there is no reason why we can not chase down a big total," said Bayliss.

Bayliss was happy though with the team's persistence on what was a grueling day in the field and was pleased to announce that the battle scarred Tilakaratne Dilshan would bat if necessary in the second innings.

After a succession of calamitous collapses, the Pakistanis must have feared the worse when they went four down for only 67 runs. However vice-captain Misbah-ul-Haq and former captain Shoaib Malik put their heads down and showed the application and restraint in shot selection that has been lacking all series.

Shoaib who has fond memories of the ground after his match saving 148 last time round, made another century and was keen to share the credit with his vice captain.

"Misbah has been out of form, but the way he applied himself was an inspiration to me and showed me that crease occupation was the order of the day, with so much time left in the match. The pitch was seaming around less than the previous Tests and I am glad to have finally cashed in and got a big total, after getting a couple of starts in the series. The wicket was starting to turn more as the day went on and we are confident that with two spinners in our team, we can push for victory," said Shoaib.

by Rex Clementine

An unbeaten hundred by Shoaib Malik took away any Sri Lankan hopes of a 3-0 whitewash in the series after Pakistan fought back admirably to wrestle back the initiative on the third day of the third Test Match here at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground yesterday. At stumps on day three, Pakistan had reached 300 for five with a lead of 366 runs. The Sri Lankans have never chased more than 352 runs to win a Test Match and if they are to win here, they will have to rewrite history books.

Although the wicket looks good to bat on, having not scored 300 runs even once in the series, it looks a daunting task for the hosts.

As Pakistan finished off an excellent day three, Malik was unbeaten on 106, his second Test hundred; incidentally his previous century too had come against the Sri Lankans at this ground. Providing him solid company was wicket-keeper batsman Kamran Akmal, who reached his half-century just before close of play and the pair added a 100 run stand for the sixth wicket in just 124 balls.

The first session of day-three was a disappointing one for the Pakistanis as they lost three wickets after resuming from the overnight total of 16 for one. They were struggling at 67 for four, but Misbah-ul-Haq and Malik batted the morning session watchfully and then took the attack onto the Sri Lankans in the afternoon session without being separated.

Rangana Herath's left-arm spin that had looked threatening in both Galle and P. Sara was comfortably dealt with as both batsmen played him with control.

Their partnership of 119 ended when Misbah was caught behind off Angelo



Pakistan's Shoaib Malik bows down to the ground after reaching his century, on the third day of the third cricket Test match between Sri Lanka and Pakistan in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Wednesday, July 22, 2009. (AP - Gurinder Osan)

Malik's hundred puts Pakistan in command

Mathews for 65.

Sri Lanka were looking to run through the lower middle-order that had not got many runs in the series, but any of those hopes soon evaporated as Akmal joined his former captain. Runs came easy and fast for the tourists in the last session as they scored as many as 131 runs in 32 overs.

Akmal in particular was in good nick as his unbeaten 60 came in just 68 balls with six boundaries and a six, but the hero of the day for Pakistan undoubtedly was Malik.

Although Pakistan were struggling at 67 for four when Malik walked into bat by the time stumps were drawn on day-three, they had reached 300 for five and were looking good for a lead of over 400.

Last time Pakistan played here, Sri Lanka set them an improbable target of 458 in 121 overs and were set to win the game. But Malik, who was promoted to open the innings played a superb knock,



a watchful unbeaten 148 in over eight hours and helped Pakistan to hold on for a draw.

Here with the series already lost and with the team playing for pride, he rose to the occasion admirably and put Pakistan in a very steady position.

It wasn't however the perfect effort by the Sri Lankans on the field. A stumping chance off Malik went begging when he

was on 91 as Sangakkara failed to collect the ball off the bowling of Herath. Later he came down the track to Herath to hoist him inside out over deep extra cover to reach three figures in style.

A catch off Akmal too was put down as Thilan Samaraweera running in from deep extra cover spilled it denying Angelo Mathews a second wicket with just three balls to go for stumps.

Shoaib hit ten fours and a six for his 106 that came in 186 balls.

It was a hard day's work for the Sri Lankans as just four wickets fell on the day. Sri Lanka opted for the second new ball immediately after it was made available, but it only leaked more runs.

Veteran Chaminda Vaas playing his last Test Match was not called up to bowl until the 32nd over of the innings and even when the second new ball was taken, the other two seamers were preferred over him.

SCOREBOARD

Pakistan 1st Innings	299
Sri Lanka 1st Innings	233
Pakistan 2nd Innings	(Overnight 16-1)
K. Manzoor b Herath	2
F. Alam c & b Thushara	16
Y. Khan lbw b Kulasekera	19
M. Yousof c Sangakkara b Herath	23
Misbah-ul-Haq c S.Kara b Mathews	65
S. Malik not out	106
K. Akmal not out	60
Extras: (6b, 2lb, 1w)	9
TOTAL: (for five wickets)	300
OVERS: 95	
Fall of wickets: 1-16, 2-22, 3-54, 4-67, 5-186.	
Still to bat: U. Gul, S. Ajmal, M. Aamer, D. Kaneria.	
Bowling: Kulasekera 15-5-33-1 (1w), Thushara 19-2-84-1, Herath 37-6-113-2, Vaas 14-6-29-0, Mathews 10-1-33-1.	
Umpires: I. Gould, (Eng), S. Taufel, (Aus).	
Third umpire: G. Silva, (SL).	
Match Referee: A. Hurst, (Aus).	
Toss: Sri Lanka.	
Series: Sri Lanka leads (3) 2-0.	

Dilshan doubtful for ODI series



Tillekeratne Dilshan

The participation of dashing batsman Tillekeratne Dilshan in the upcoming five-match ODI series against Pakistan remains doubtful after the 32-year-old fractured his right index finger while keeping wickets during Pakistan's first innings.

The middle-order batsman batted at number eight on Tuesday despite the fractured thumb and made a useful 44, but sustained a cut above his right eyebrow while trying to sweep Saeed Ajmal.

Team Manager Brendon Kuruppu told *'The Island'* that the cut required multiple stitches.

"Dilshan was not feeling well today, but will see whether he's fit enough to bat tomorrow" Kuruppu said.

Kuruppu further added that the batsman remained a doubtful starter for the ODI series in Dambulla, but added that the team medical staff is monitoring his situation.

CR fly half Dev Anand crosses over to Navy SC

by Ravi Nagahawatte

Ceylonese Rugby & Football Club (CR&FC) which suffered a heavy blow in the form of a defeat at the hands of Navy Sports Club last week has encountered another setback with their regular fly half and place kicker Dev Anand leaving

the club and joining the 'Sailors'.

Navy Sports Club coach Ronnie Ibrahim confirmed with *The Island* that Anand had joined Navy Sports Club.

Asked whether Anand had violated tournament rules by crossing over to another club, during an ongoing championship in which he had represented

another team, Ibrahim answered in the negative. "There is no problem because tournament rules allow players to join forces teams during the season," Ibrahim said.

It is also speculated that CR&FC centre Chamara Vithanage has left the club and returned to Kandy.

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