The Island
Sports
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Sri Lanka booted out of Hong Kong Sevens

by Ravi Nagahawatte

Sri Lanka's excitement in hosting the final edition of Asian Sevens series in a few days time has been dampened with the news of the islanders being booted out of next year's Hong Kong Sevens tournament.

According to the International Rugby Board (IRB) official website, Sri Lanka has failed to make the line-up of teams among the Asian nations that have qualified for the Hong Kong leg of the IRB sevens circuit 2009/2010.

The Asian nations that have qualified for the next edition of the Hong Kong Sevens are Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, China, Chinese Taipei and Thailand.

Rugby critics are of the opinion that Sri Lanka failed to cement a slot in the Hong Kong Sevens due their dismal performance in the Shanghai Sevens. They also point out that another reason that would have contributed towards Sri Lanka's omission from the line-up in Hong Kong is failing to send a team for the recently concluded Borneo Sevens, in Malaysia.

Sri Lanka's rugby authorities refrained from fielding a team for the Borneo Sevens stating that contesting the tournament would be unproductive.

From the six-leg Asian Sevens series, only the Shanghai Sevens and the Borneo Sevens are recognized as IRB rated tournaments.

Dr.Maiya Gunasekere Chairman Rugby Interim Committee told ***The Island*** that the organizers of the Hong Kong Sevens tournament rotated invitations to teams and there was nothing to be alarmed about Sri Lanka not obtaining a slot at the tournament next year.

Rugby critics add that it is a shame Sri Lanka couldn't find a slot in Hong Kong because the team fared creditably at the 2009 edition of the tournament, having memorable games against Australia, Zimbabwe and Japan.

"We have not been invited for the Hong Kong Sevens two years running in the past. Not being invited for the Hong Kong Sevens is nothing new. Now what we need to do is to do well in the Asian Sevens Series and qualify for the Hong Kong Sevens in 2011," said Gunasekere.

"Asian sides can't offer much competition to top teams at the Hong Kong Sevens. The most we could do is score a few tries, tackle some players and gain some exposure by gong for the Hong Kong Sevens," added Guansekere.

Asked whether being omitted from the Hong Kong Sevens would have a negative impact on rugby sevens in Sri Lanka, Gunasekere answered in the negative.

After the conclusion of the second and final IRB rated tournament in the Asian Sevens Series, Japan, Korea and Hong Kong have secured the top three places in the Asian Sevens ratings. From 13 Asian countries that have been rated by the IRB, Sri Lanka is placed 10th, which is only ahead of nations like Guam (11th), Brunei (12th) and Indonesia (13th).

Significant improvements have been made at rugby sevens by teams like Thailand (6th) Malaysia (7th) and India (8th). According to the IRB, these ratings would be applicable in inviting teams for IRB rated tournaments for the rest of the year.

Sri Lanka will host the final and sixth leg of the Asian Sevens Series in Colombo on November 28 and 29. The penultimate leg of the Asian Sevens Series will be hosted by Iran on November 20-22.

Ravi questions Lokuge on SLC

Minister Lokuge

Karunanayake

by Saman Indrajith

The government yesterday failed to answer a question raised by the Opposition on the administration of Sri Lanka Cricket funds and requested for more time.

UNP Colombo District MP, Ravi Karunanayake, requested Minister of Sports and Public Recreation Gamini Lokuge to inform the House the names of persons who are administering funds of Sri Lanka Cricket; the cash position at the moment and for the last five years on yearly basis; the source of funds to the Cricket Board for the last ten (10) years on yearly basis; whether all awards which help the country to earn revenue are decided by a Tender Board; and if not, the method which is fairly applied.

MP Karunanayake also asked the Sport Minister to submit to the House the audited accounts of Sri Lanka Cricket for the past six (6) years.

He also requested the Sports Minister to state the amount been paid to national cricketers and other contracted players; whether their earnings are tax free; if not what the tax input is; the names of the 20 most expensive officers at Sri Lanka Cricket; their monthly/yearly earnings for the past five (05) years on yearly basis separately.

Sports Minister Lokuge was not present at the chamber when the question listed in the Order Paper came up. Chief Government Whip Urban Development and Sacred Area Development Minister Dinesh Gunawardena asked for one month's time to answer the question.

Under-19 Cricket

Zahira hold Royal to a draw

by Reemsu Fernando

Forced to follow on after being bowled out for 111 runs, Zahira College did well in the second innings to force a draw to their Inter School Under-19 match against Royal College at Reid Avenue yesterday.

Skipper Mohamed Ishan scored back to back half centuries while Assad Borham scored an unbeaten 52 runs in just 50 balls for Zahira to post 180 for nine wickets before bad light stopped play. Ishan followed up his first innings half century with a 54 ball knock which produced 61 runs.

For Royal College Maneesha Tantrigoda completed a match bag of nine wickets with an impressive six wicket haul in the second innings.

Scores:

Royal 212 for 6 decl in 44.2 overs (Chalaka Bogoda 57, Prabhath Sampath 27, Bhanuka Rajapakse 31, Waruna Dissanayake 22, Kithruwan Vithanage 43, Milan Abeysekara 24; Mohamed Ishan 3/75)

Zahira 111 all out in 42.3 overs (Mohamed Ishan 51, Mohamed Shihan 18; Imran Khan 5/18, Maneesha Tantrigoda 3/32) and 180 for 9 at close in 46 overs (Mohamed Ishan 61, Assad Borham 52n.o; Maneesha Tantrigoda 6/59, Waruna Dissanayake 2/19)

Joes 194, Kalutara MV 124/6

In reply to St. Joseph's College 194 runs, Kalutara Vidyalaya were 124 for six wickets at close on the first day of their match which commenced at Kalutara yesterday.

Scores:

St. Joseph's 194 all out in 63.3 overs (Keshan Perera 25, Jaan Jayasinghe 56, Roscoe Thattil 31, Sachin Hewawasam 40; Brian Chapal 2/14, Savith Priyan 4/25)

Kalutara Vidyalaya 124 for 6 in 34 overs (Kushan Samithajith 40n.o, Tharindu Uthpala 22, Chamika Madushan 22; Dinal Dhambarage 2/38)

Pavithra hits half century for Dharmapala

Nipun Pavithara top scored with 57 runs for Dharmapala College to post 237 runs on the first day of their match commenced at Bloomfield Ground yesterday.

In reply Nalanda were 71 for three wickets at close.

Scores:

Dharmapala 237 all out in 73 overs (Nipun Pavithara 57, Rasitha Gamage 44, Dilrukshan Jayasundara 36; Nipun Karunanayake 2/28, Dinuk Jayasinghe 2/63, Suranga Tennakoon 2/18)

Nalanda 71 for 3 in 23 overs (Tharindu Vidanapathirana 34)

Kodituwakku dazzles at the third Asian Women's Indoor Games in Vietnam.

Anusha wins a bronze for Sri Lanka

The 3rd Asian Women's Indoor Games commenced from 31st October 2009 at Hanoi, Vietnam and Sri Lanka's women's boxing team comprising of Anusha Kodituwakku (Pin Wt), Nilmini Jayasinghe (Fly Wt), Sithari Sandareka (Bantam Wt) and Niluka Karunarathna (Feather wt) participated at this tournament.

Anusha Kodituwakku went against Mari Murayama of Japan in the first fight in the preliminaries. Although Mari put on a brave fight, she was no match for the agile Anusha Kodituwakku who kept on scoring well until she won the bout by 25 points to 8.

In the quarter-finals, Anusha Kodituwakku beat Mal Rai of Nepal by 12 points to 1 and won the bronze medal in the semi-finals after she lost to hard hitting Nguyen Hhi Hoa of Vietnam by 4 points to 14 points.

Anusha was the champion of the Asian Boxing Championships held in Vietnam in 2006. She is also the only member from the 19 member contingent from Sri Lanka to have won a medal so far at this year's Asian Women's Indoor Games.

Nilmini Jayasinghe, the gold medal winner at the International Women's Championships in Russia this year, lost to powerful Chhoto Loura of India by 10:2 in the quarter finals. Sithari Sandaraka was outclassed by Zhang Qin of China in the 2nd round. Niluka Karunarathna lost to Ngo Thi Chung of Vietnam by 3:14.

Injured Siddle adds to Aussie woes in India

Injury-plagued Australia suffered yet another blow on Tuesday when fast bowler Peter Siddle was ruled out of the rest of the one-day series in India because of a side strain.

Siddle is the fourth player after fellow fast bowler Brett Lee, all-rounder James Hopes and wicket-keeper Tim Paine to be sent home with injury.

The tourists were already missing one-day regulars Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Callum Ferguson and Nathan Bracken, all out the tour with various niggles.

Siddle bowled five overs during his team's 24-run win in the fourth match in Mohali on Monday before experiencing stiffness near his left rib cage.

Team physiotherapist Kevin Sims said Siddle's injury was not serious but he was told to leave the tour because he was unlikely to be available for the last three games of the seven-match series.

"With this in mind, we have made the decision that Peter will return to Australia, where he will be reviewed by Cricket Australia medical staff to ensure he is available for selection at the beginning of the Australian summer," Sims said.

Dialog Champions League soccer 2009

Don Bosco and Blue star through to semis

by Manjula D. Phillips

Don Bosco SC beat New Young's SC, Wennappuwa by 2 goals to 1 at Wennappuwa. Meanwhile, Blue Star SC beat defending League champions Army SC by 1 goal to nil at Kalutara. Both teams booked their semi -final berths in the Dialog Champions League football championships.

A keen battle was witnessed between the top three teams in group B to enter the semi-final, but, finally Don Bosco SC and Blue Star SC qualified.

In the first semi- final match of Group "A", champions Renown SC will meet the second placed Blue Star SC of Group "B", on November 14 while, Group "B" champions, Don Bosco will meet second placed Air Force SC of group "A", in the second semi -final on November 15, at the City Football League, Slave Island.

The final will be played on November 22, also at the same venue.

Bandara and Wijithakumara to run in SA Games marathon

by Reemus Fernando

The hopes of new national champion Ishan Wijethilaka and runner up Ajith Rathnayake of representing the country at the forthcoming South Asian Games are effectively over after Ajith Bandara and Upul Wijithakumara were selected to run the Games' marathon in Bangladesh early next year.

South Asian Games gold medalist Bandara and Wijithakumara have been selected after a snap trial held for the Sri Lanka marathon poolists over the weekend.

SLAA sources said Bandara and Wijithakumara have clocked 1:48.47 and 1:50.20 minutes respectively at a 35 km run. While Ratnayake has been beaten to the third place at the trial, Wijethilaka, who is recovering after a surgery, has not taken part.

Sports ministry authorities termed the recently held national marathon of the National sports festival at Dehiattakandiya as the selection ground for SA Games prior to the event. It gave immense hopes for the winners of the marathon Ishan Wijethilaka and his runner up Ajith Ratnayake. SLAA sources said that a fresh trial had to be held to select the best contenders as there was a huge time difference between the National Marathon and the date of the South Asian Games.

Sources said although Wijethilaka had informed of his condition and was likely to recover before the SA Games, fielding him for the regional event would risk his future career.

Wijethilaka produced an impressive time of 2:23.03 minutes, his personal best, to win the national sports festival marathon at Dehiattakandiya. Former national champion and SA Games gold medalist Ajith Bandara did not take part in the National Marathon citing an injury but now has the chance to defend his gold medal after winning the trial.

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