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# Rugby sevens legend Serevi to visit Sri Lanka

by Ravi Nagahawatte

Sri Lanka was elated on Tuesday with the news of former Fiji sevens player and rugby legend Waisale Serevi being expected in Sri Lanka with a team Papua Nui Guinea rugby team for the upcoming Carlton Sevens Rugby tournament.

Tournament Director and former Sri Lanka national coach George Simpkins broke the news about Serevi's visit to Sri Lanka, to media representatives, at a press conference held in connection with the upcoming rugby sevens tournament, at Cinnamon Grand, in Colombo, yesterday.

Serevi delighted rugby fans the world over with his speed, skills and gimmicks in the abbreviated form of rugby union during a career which spanned between 1989 and 2003.

Serevi is expected to accompany a team from Papua Nui Guinea. The team from Papua Nui Guinea will be one of six teams that has confirmed participation in an international sevens tournament which will be held concurrently with the Carlton Sevens main tournament which will feature the best teams from Asia. Five other teams from countries like New Zealand, South Africa, Australia, Western Samoa and Fiji have also confirmed participation in the international sevens tournament. The Carlton Sevens will be held on November 28 and 29 at the Sugathadasa Stadium.

Simpkins speaking to journalists at the press conference said that it was a great honour to have Serevi in Sri Lanka.

During his speech, as the tournament director, Simpkins said that Sri Lanka would benefit immensely by hosting an international sevens tournament because



George Simpkins Tournament Director Carlton Sevens (Left) and Lasitha Guneratne share a light moment during a press conference held in connection with the upcoming Carlton Sevens rugby tournament which Sri Lanka will host on November 28 and 29 at the Sugathadasa Stadium, in Colombo. A key feature in the tournament would be the arrival in the island of rugby sevens legend Waisale Serevi who is expected to coach the Papua Nui Guinea team at the tournament. Serevi's picture is seen on a banner that was hung behind the press conference table.

(Picture by Jude Pathiraja)

sevens was the way forward in rugby union. "There is incredible interest now for rugby sevens, simply after the sport was included in the Olympic Games. I can assure you that standards in rugby sevens would now not remain still and every team will be working hard to improve. It will be increasingly difficult for teams to qualify for big tournaments in the future," said Simpkins.

The New Zealander said that he had travelled to 37 countries for rugby tournaments and added

that he believed the Sri Lankan leg of the upcoming Asian Sevens Series had the potential to become as big as any other rugby sevens tournament in the world.

He said that next year the Carlton Sevens would be recognized as an IRB rated tournament.

The teams that will feature in the sixth and final leg of the Asian Series Tournament hosted by Sri Lanka, are Japan, Kazakhstan, Iran (Group A), Chinese Taipei, Thailand, Jordan (Group B), China, Malaysia,

Brunei (Group C) and South Korea, Sri Lanka and Pakistan (Group D).

The tournament has received the patronage of Carlton Sports Club and has also attracted sponsors in the likes of John Keels, Cinnamon Grand, Elephant House Ice Cream, Elephant House Drinks, Sri Lanka Insurance, Youth Radio, Sri Lanka Rupavahini and Channel Eye and Edirisinghe Transport Services.

The Carlton Sevens will also have a segment for top rugby playing schools in the island.

## Prima Champions Trophy

# Kandy hold nerve to book final berth

by Reemus Fernando

Defending champions Kandy booked their final berth with a nerve tingling one wicket victory over Galle in the Prima Champions Trophy Under-15 Inter-District

Tournament Semi-final which went to the wire at Ananda Mawatha yesterday.

Chasing 99 runs to win, Kandy felt the jilts when their top scorer Ron Chandraguptha was undone by Maduka Vimukthi with a brilliant one handed catch in the deep to leave them precariously placed at 97 for nine wickets.

But Rochana Hettiarachchi managed to hold his nerve in the final over to score the winning runs with two balls to spare. He was unbeaten on 15 off six deliveries.

A paltry total of 99, suddenly looked defensible for Galle when Kandy lost wickets at regular intervals.

They were off to a disastrous start losing three wickets for 15 runs. And they went further down losing seven wickets for 77 runs at the end of the 21st over. But left-hander Chandraguptha gave them hopes when he took bowlers to the task in the dying stages. Chandraguptha hit 39 runs inclusive of four fours and one six before being caught brilliantly by Vimukthi in the penultimate over.

Batting first Galle were restricted to 98 runs as Nuwan Karunaratne, Dushan Malalaseena and Ron Chandraguptha shared seven wickets between them. Hasitha Madushan was the only batsman to top

20 runs as he top scored with 30 runs (in 55 deliveries) for Galle.

The match was played as a 25 overs a side affair after wet ground conditions delayed the start.

Now Kandy will meet Colombo South 'A' in the finals.

### Scores:

**Galle** 98 all out in 24.4 overs (Maduka Vimukthi 13, Yohan Rashmika 14, Hasitha Madushan 30; Nuwan Karunaratne 2/14, Dushan Malalaseena 3/05, Ron Chandraguptha 2/10)

**Kandy** 99 for 9 in 24.4 overs (Ron Chandraguptha 39, Rajitha Jayatunga 10, Dushan Malalaseena 11, Rochana Hettiarachchi 15n.o; Chamod Piyumal 3/12, Hasitha Madushan 2/19)

### Colombo South 'A' cruise to final

Isuru Gunathilaka, Thaveesha Ratnayake and Jeson Bultjens scored half centuries in a huge total of 293 runs as Colombo South 'A' registered an easy 131 run victory over Badulla in their semi-final played at Bemalapitiya yesterday.

### Scores:

**Colombo South A** 293 all out in 36.3 overs (Isuru Gunathilaka 60, Thaveesha Ratnayake 57, Jeson Bultjens 52, Chathuranga Rajapakse 43, Ronaka Ahangamage 24; Akila Niroshan 2/37, Mahela Bandara 2/35, Gamini Bandara 2/71)

**Badulla** 162 all out in 48.4 overs (Lahiru Dushantha 63, Kavindu Dimuth 23; Ranitha Liyanarachchi 3/32, Chamila Godallawatte 3/27, Julian de Silva 2/26)



The members of the defending champions Kandy are celebrating their Prima Champions Trophy semi-final victory over Galle at Ananda Mawatha yesterday. (Pic by Kamal Bogoda)

## Sreesanth, Khan back in India's Test team



Khan

**NEW DELHI (AP)** - Indian cricket selectors have recalled fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth and fit-again paceman Zaheer Khan for the three-Test series against Sri Lanka.

The 26-year-old Sreesanth played his last Test against South Africa in Kanpur in 2008 before he was sidelined due to disciplinary issues. He made his way back into the squad after taking 22 wickets in 10 matches for Warwickshire and will now likely share the new ball with Khan.

Khan has recovered from a shoulder injury that kept him out of the Champions Trophy and the one-day series at home against Australia.

The experienced test batting duo of Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman were also included after being ignored



Sreesanth

for the one-day series against Australia.

The selectors also named uncapped left-arm spinner Pragnan Ojha along with first-choice spinners Harbhajan Singh and Amit Mishra.

The Test series begins in Ahmedabad on Nov. 16, followed by Test matches at Kanpur on Nov. 24-28 and Mumbai on Dec. 2-6.

After the Test series, both teams will play two Twenty20 games and a five-match one-day series. Squad: Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Virender Sehwag, Gautam Gambhir, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Yuvraj Singh, M Vijay, S Badrinath, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Ishant Sharma, Shanthakumaran Sreesanth, Pragnan Ojha and Amit Mishra.

## Tennis players face 'sparring' problems

by Revata S. Silva

Some of the leading tennis administrators, including a member of the proposed national selection committee, are engaged in 'sparring' with leading players of the country creating fears that there would be favouritism happening in future team selections, it is reported.

'Sparring' is a common practice in many sports where either a professional or a senior plays with an amateur with a view to improve his or her playing standards mostly for a fee.

"How can a selector do 'sparring' with players who are part of a leading tennis squad in the country? Won't such players have undue advantage in selections?," asked one parent of a player on the grounds of anonymity as his son is presently training under the Sri Lanka Tennis Association (SLTA) coaching programme.

When quizzed about the issue, Aasiri Iddamalagoda, former Davis Cup player and

one of the present Vice Presidents of the SLTA, accepted there was an ethical aspect involving when any SLTA official does 'sparring' with a prospective player for a fee.

"There will be technical guidelines laid down to select players for an event like the Davis Cup and therefore I don't think there would be a possibility where 'sparring' creates an unfair effect on selections. But there is a possibility for a conflict of interest to take place," explained Iddamalagoda who maintained it was not ethical for any official holding office in tennis administration to do either coaching or 'sparring'.

Meanwhile Rohan de Silva, another Davis Cup rep for Sri Lanka who has been nominated for the proposed national selection committee, agreed to Iddamalagoda's opinion.

"It's true that such a thing is not ethical. I myself have to stop 'sparring' if I am to work in future as a national selector," de Silva added.

## Under-19 Cricket

### Kamileen hits century for Thurstan

A century from skipper Shihan Kamileen (10x4s) for Thurstan College and a five wicket haul from spinner Roscoe Thattil for St. Joseph's College were the highlights on the first day of their Inter-School Under-19 match which commenced at Darley Road yesterday.

**Scores:** **Thurstan** 182 all out in 71.3 overs (Shihan Kamileen 109, Prabodha Arthavidu 21; Dinal Dhambarege 2/49, Chathuranga Kumara 2/30, Roscoe Thattil 5/51)

**St. Joseph's** 17 for 1 in 7 overs (Kevin Bernadus 10n.o) (RF)

## Asian Athletics Championship

### Wijekoon and Pushpakumara qualify

The team captain, Chaminda Wijekoon and Rohitha Pushpakumara brought consolation to the Sri Lankan camp when they qualified for their respective events at the heats as a host of other athletes failed in their efforts, on the first day of the Asian Athletics Championship which commenced at Guangdong Olympic Stadium, Guangzhou, China yesterday. Wijekoon qualified for the next stage in the men's 1500 meters when he finished third clocking a time of 3 minutes and 46.26 seconds in the first heat of the event.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Othman of the KSA won the event by producing a time of 3:44.82. Wijekoon's Indian counterpart Chatholi Hamza finished in 3:46.24 minutes to be placed second.

Rohitha Pushpakumara qualified for the next stage in the men's 400 meters when he finished third with a timing of 47.03 seconds in the heats, while the defending champion of the event Prasanna Amarasekara, was disqualified.

The duo's performances brought relief to the Sri Lankan team after almost all other athletes failed to qualify in the heats.

Achala Dias was placed sixth in the women's 100 meter heats with a timing of 12.38 seconds while Chandrika Subashini finished with a timing of 55.32 minutes to finish sixth in the women's 400 meters heats, but failed to qualify.

S.M. Weerasuriya was sixth in the 100 meter heats with a timing of 11.12 seconds. N.C.D. Priyadarshani was scheduled to take part in the women's long jump yesterday but the result was not available at the time this edition went to press.