



Dilshan Sri Lankan charge leads

Rex Clementine
reporting from Ahmedabad

The Sri Lankan cricket team has been so committed to the cause of winning their first Test in India; they have put in plenty of hard work and on a batsmen friendly track here at the Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad, the only way they were going to do it was by piling up a huge first innings total. It all appeared to be going that way as Tillekeratne Dilshan and Kumar Sangakkara notched up four runs an over during a 115 run stand for the second wicket as Sri Lanka reached 189 for one when two poor shots in the space of 15 deliveries brought the hosts back into the game.

Sri Lanka reached 275 for three at stumps on day two and were still 151 runs behind with seven wickets in hand.



The Sri Lankan bowlers picked up the remaining four wickets for the addition of just 41 runs to restrict India to 426 earlier in the day. More importantly Chanaka Welagedara removed Rahul Dravid without any addition to this overnight score when he forced the batsman to play on to his stumps for 177. That meant, Welagedara, a late inclusion to the side, accounted for the top four Indian batsmen.

Sri Lanka started well as Dilshan added 74 runs for the first wicket with Tharanga Paranavithana. It wasn't an altogether convincing effort by Paranavithana and having made 35 runs in 55 deliveries with six boundaries, the left-hander fell for an excellent diving catch by wicketkeeper Mahendra Singh Dhoni off the bowling of Ishant Sharma. Sangakkara then joined Dilshan and the pair added 115 runs for the second wicket in quick time scoring four runs an over off all four Indian bowlers.

Despite slowing down a bit in the 80s, Dilshan reached his second hundred as an opener with his 11th boundary off 120 deliveries.

It's the efforts of the 31-year-old in T-20 cricket and One-Day Internationals this year that have been highlighted, but Sri Lanka's Cricketer of the Year has enjoyed a better run in Test cricket hav-



Sri Lanka's Tillekeratne Dilshan celebrates after scoring a century during the second day of the first Test cricket match between India and Sri Lanka in Ahmedabad, India, Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2009. (AP Photo/Ajaz Rahi)

ing posted five centuries in 2009 - two against Bangladesh, one each against India, Pakistan and New Zealand.

Overall, it was his tenth Test hundred.

He's also very likely to complete 1000 runs in the calendar year having already got 961 runs at an amazing average of 73.92.

His dismissal, however, will disappoint the Dilshan fans as along with Sangakkara he could have batted the Indians out of the game. On 112, he attempted to pull Zaheer Khan, but ended up hitting straight in the air and Rahul Dravid running from gully called for the skier and took it comfortably.

In the next over, another short delivery accounted for Sangakkara, with the Sri Lanka captain making a mess of the hook shot and the catch was taken cleanly at the edge of the fine leg boundary by Sachin Tendulkar.

Although two quick wickets brought

India back in the hunt, Mahela Jayawardene and Thilan Samaraweera consolidated with an unbroken 81 run stand for the fourth wicket.

Their positive attitude helped the team to maintain nearly a rate of four runs. Jayawardene was unbeaten on 36 at stumps while Samaraweera, who got most of the strike, outscored his colleague reaching 45.

With two players who have a knack for big scores as overnight batsmen, Sri Lanka could push on and take a commanding lead. However, after the pair, the tourists' lower middle order lacks experience and both batsmen will have to shoulder lot of responsibility.

But what will work in Sri Lanka's favour is that India will not be able to take the new ball until the 11th over today and that provides them with an opportunity to see off the first hour of the morning that has proved to be tricky to bat.

SL's centurion feels team can win Test

Rex Clementine
reporting from Ahmedabad

Tillekeratne Dilshan, who hit his fifth Test hundred this year, believes Sri Lanka has a chance to win their first Test in India here if they manage a first innings lead of 150 runs.

The 31-year-old completed his second Test hundred as an opener and 10th overall, anchoring the innings with 112 runs on the second day of first Test here in Ahmedabad.

"Mahela and Thilan need to bat out the first session and the ball will start turning towards the end and a lead of around 150 will give us an edge," Dilshan told journalists.

"It's great to score a hundred in India. It's not easy out here. I am very pleased with the way I batted. The decision to open batting has helped me. That's the best decision I have taken in my career. Now, there's an opportunity for me to bat longer," he added.

He also felt losing two wickets in quick succession to Zaheer Khan allowed India to get back into the game.

"Those two wickets turned out to be crucial. I shouldn't have probably played that shot. There was nothing much for the bowlers on that track. The main target we have is to bat longer and get closer to 400 and see how it goes from there. We have two good spinners and if we get that lead we can control things."

Earlier, Sri Lanka's bowlers did well to claim the last four Indian wickets for 41 runs and Dilshan said things went according to plan for the Sri Lankans. "That was the main target we had. To get the last four wickets before they got to 450. It's a good batting track and they could have gone on to score more than that. I thought we stuck to our plan and Welagedara bowled a superb first spell and got Rahul early and that was the key."

Thushara to return home, Dilhara goes as replacement

Left-arm seamer Thilan Thushara, who picked up a shoulder injury ahead of the first Test against India here in Ahmedabad will return home and Sri Lanka will fly in Dilhara Fernando, the stand-by as the replacement, Sri Lanka team manager Brendon Kuruppu told journalists.

Thushara hurt his bowling shoulder when he collided with Kaushal Silva the day before the game while at practice and subsequently was ruled out of the first Test.

"Thilan Thushara has a shoulder injury that we discovered yesterday morning. After an MRF scan we have found out that the injury will take at least two to four weeks to heal and that's the reason we have decided to fly him home."

"Dilhara is the standby bowler. Of the four stand by players, he's the only fast bowler and that's the reason the selectors decided to fly him to India," Kuruppu added. - RC



Thilan Thushara

Sri Lanka starts training with half the squad

by Ravi Nagahawatte

Sri Lanka's training for the Carlton Sevens rugby tournament got off to a wobbly start yesterday with almost half the squad not being able to make it to the grounds.

Sri Lanka coach Imthie Marikar told *The Island* that he was ecstatic to see even half the squad at training given that there was such a long lay off from rugby.

It is learnt that a good number of the sevens players weren't available for National pool training due to their commitments with the Defense Services 15-a-side Rugby tournament which concluded on Monday, with Navy emerging champions.

"The boys were rather enthusiastic about starting training and I expect to see the full squad at training tomorrow (Wednesday)," said Marikar.

However, he warned that without the full squad it was difficult to play even a practice game. "The most important thing

is that we started, but I am afraid about four players will not be able to make themselves available due to injuries," he said.

Marikar said that competing at international rugby sevens tournaments was becoming increasingly difficult, with the sport being included in the Olympic Games. "Sri Lanka needs to be consistent,

Carlton Sevens

playing rugby sevens. If not, we may not receive invitations for future tournaments," he stressed.

Marikar, a former National player, who was also the manager of the Sri Lanka side at the 2009 Hong Kong Sevens, added that the governments of all rugby playing nations had taken rugby sevens seriously.

He spoke highly of South Korea, which is one of the teams in Group D, which also includes Sri Lanka and Pakistan. "The Koreans are very strong and have won the

Shanghai Leg of the Asian Sevens Series," he said.

Marikar said that the players were found wanting in their fitness during the latter part of the training session yesterday and added; "there is a lot of work for the fitness trainer."

Sri Lanka's renowned fitness trainer Mohitlal Jayatilake is in charge of the fitness needs of the team.

The Carlton Sevens rugby tournament will be held on November 28 and 29 at the Sugathadasa Stadium in Colombo and will feature top teams like Japan (winner of the Asian Sevens Series), Kazakhstan, Chinese Taipei, Thailand, China and Malaysia.

The Carlton Sevens is the final stop in a newly introduced Asian Sevens Series which also had tournaments in China, Brunei, Borneo (Malaysia) and Iran. Japan has already won the Asian Sevens Series as it won the final ranking tournament which was hosted by Malaysia (Borneo Sevens).

Scoreboard	
India 1st Innings	
G. Gambhir b Welagedara	01
V. Sehwag lbw b Welagedara	16
R. Dravid b Welagedara	177
S. Tendulkar b Welagedara	04
V.V.S. Laxman b Prasad	00
Yuvraj Singh ct Dilshan b Muralitharan	68
M.S. Dhoni ct P. Jayawardene b Prasad	110
Harbhajan Singh b Muralitharan	22
Zaheer Khan lbw b Herath	12
A. Mishra not out	07
I. Sharma st P. Jayawardene b M'tharan	00
Extras: (b 2, lb 2, nb 4, w 1)	09
Total: all out	426
Overs: 104.5	
Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-27, 3-31, 4-32, 5-157, 6-381, 7-389, 8-414, 9-426.	
Bowling: Welagedara 22-4-87-4 (1nb) (1w), Prasad 22-1-106-2 (2nb), Mathews 12-1-50-0, Muralitharan 25.5-4-97-3 (1nb), Herath 22-2-79-1, Dilshan 1-0-3-0.	
Sri Lanka 1st Innings	
T. Dilshan ct Dravid b Zaheer	112
T. Paranavithana ct Dhoni b Sharma	35
K. Sangakkara ct Tendulkar b Zaheer	31
M. Jayawardene not out	36
T. Samaraweera not out	45
Extras: (lb 5, nb 9, w 2)	16
Total: for three wickets	275
Overs: 70	
Fall of wickets: 1-74, 2-189, 3-194.	
Bowling: Zaheer 15-2-45-2 (3nb) (1w), Ishant 14-0-53-1 (3nb) (1w), Harbhajan 20-2-72-0, Mishra 18-0-89-0 (3nb), Yuvraj 3-0-11-0.	
To bat: Angelo Mathews, Prasanna Jayawardene (wicketkeeper), Dammika Prasad, Rangana Herath, Chanaka Welagedara and Muttiah Muralitharan.	
Umpires: Tony Hill (NZ) and Darrel Harper (Aus)	
Match Referee: Jeff Crowe (NZ)	

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