

W INDIES USE MANKAD TO BEAT ZIMBABWE

CHITTAGONG: A controversial run out in the last over earned West Indies a place in the quarterfinals of the Under-19 World Cup yesterday as fast bowler Keemo Paul removed the batsman at the bowler's end with the batsman a fraction out of his ground.

The practice, known as a Mankad, is rare and widely seen as unsporting. Traditionally, a bowler warns a batsman if he is leaving his crease too early, but Paul gave Zimbabwean batsman Richard Ngarava no warning, even though the batsman did not appear to be seeking an advantage.

Australia coach Darren Lehmann took to Twitter to condemn the West Indies tactic. "Unbelievable. Not Out," he wrote. Former New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming tweeted, "this is not a good look, absolutely disgraceful behaviour!!"

Zimbabwe needed only three runs in the 50th over for a place in the last eight but Paul broke the stumps without entering his delivery stride with last man Richard Ngarava standing a few steps outside his popping crease with his bat on the line. Onfield umpires conferred before asking

West Indies players whether they wanted to uphold the appeal against a decision which was within the rules of the game.

Once West Indies players confirmed they wanted to go ahead with the appeal, the television umpire was consulted and Ngarava's bat was found to be just on the line.

Zimbabwe captain Brandon Mavuta was in tears and said, "we got so close, no comment about it. I don't have anything to say right now." Zimbabwe coach Stephen Mangongo said he was happy with the way his side had fought in the match. "I am disappointed with the way the game ended. I have debriefed the boys in the dressing room and they were all crying," he said.

"We have explained that technically the run-out is legal. We left it to the last man and we should not have done that. It was a hard lesson and they have learnt it the hard way."

The Mankad is named after Indian bowler Vinoo Mankad, who created controversy when he dismissed Australian batsman Bill Brown in a similar manner at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1947. — AP

KIWIS AND AUSSIES AT LOGGERHEADS OVER WICKET

AUCKLAND: New Zealand and Australia were poles apart on their reading of the Eden Park wicket ahead of today's opening one-day international in Auckland with Australia backing pace and New Zealand spin.

New Zealand rushed leg-spinner Ish Sodhi into their squad yesterday, while Australia's line-up showed a preference for firing an aggressive barrage at Brendon McCullum.

A four-pronged pace armory comprising Josh Hazlewood, John Hastings, Kane Richardson and James Faulkner will be deployed, Australia skipper Steve Smith said.

McCullum is retiring from international cricket at the end of the Australia series and Smith is determined to give him a fiery send off. "Brendon has been a terrific player and leader for a long time. No doubt they'll want to send him off in the best way possible. It's up to us to make that not happen," Smith said.

"For us it's about making sure we're playing the same way we have been good, hard aggressive cricket."

McCullum, however, said Sodhi was added to the New Zealand squad as the match is being played on the same wicket where Kane Williamson was beaten by the spin of Pakistan's Azhar Ali last Sunday.

"The wicket the other day was a little bit slow and we're going to play on the same pitch," McCullum said. "Not many get past Kane so the wicket obviously had a little more turn than we expected."

"There's potential that we will look to include (Sodhi) in the side if we think the

wicket is going to hold up."

The Australians do not have pleasant memories of the last time they faced McCullum at Eden Park when the New Zealand skipper belted a 24-ball half century to lead his side to a one-wicket win in a World Cup pool game. Both sides go into the series on a winning run in one-dayers, with New Zealand having completed series victories over Pakistan (2-0) and Sri Lanka (3-1) while Australia dominated India (4-1).

Australia have opted for Shaun Marsh to open with David Warner ahead of the in-form Usman Khawaja.

"Shaun has been in the squad and played well in Australia and he deserves the first opportunity," Smith said.

"He (Khawaja) will play one of the games and he does need a hit going into what is a big Test series for us, and he's batting extremely well. He's unlucky to miss out."

Promising leg-spinner Adam Zampa has also been left out of the side while Mitchell Marsh and all-rounder Glen Maxwell provide additional bowling options.

Teams

New Zealand (from) - Brendon McCullum, Corey Anderson, Trent Boult, Doug Bracewell, Grant Elliott, Martin Guptill, Matt Henry, Adam Milne, Colin Munro, Henry Nicholls, Luke Ronchi, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Kane Williamson Australia - Steve Smith (capt), David Warner, Shaun Marsh, George Bailey, Glen Maxwell, Mitchell Marsh, Matthew Wade, James Faulkner, John Hastings, Kane Richardson, Josh Hazlewood. — AFP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan cricket coach Graham Ford, right, listens to a question as Sri Lanka Cricket President Thilanga Sumathipala watches during a press conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. Speaking yesterday, a day after taking over as coach for a second stint after an interval of two years, Ford called for patience with an inexperienced team. — AP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan fast bowler Lasith Malinga gestures during a press conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka, yesterday. Malinga has been appointed captain for the World Twenty20 championship in March and the preceding Asia Cup tournament in Bangladesh. — AP

FORD FACES 'HUGE' SRI LANKA REBUILDING TASK

COLOMBO: New Sri Lanka coach Graham Ford acknowledged yesterday he faced a huge rebuilding task after a string of retirements as he began his second stint in charge of the islanders. The South African said he was honoured to return to Sri Lanka, whom he previously coached from 2012 to 2014, but urged fans to be patient after a recent slump saw the side tumble down the Test rankings. "For a coach, it is really a special group of lads to work with," Ford told reporters, a day after taking up his post.

"At the same time, I am very aware what a huge challenge it is. I think Sri Lanka cricket finds itself in the very early stages of a very important rebuilding stage. A lot of hard work needs to be done. "Everyone, the players, the selectors and the board must have patience," added Ford, who has been handed a 45-month contract. The 55-year-old, who quit last week as coach of English county side Surrey, is taking the reins at one of the most troubled periods for Sri Lankan cricket since it was awarded Test match status in 1981. Batting stars Mahela Jayawardene and Kumar Sangakkara both retired from international cricket last year and other match-winners such as spinner Rangana Herath and the opener Tillakaratne Dilshan are expected to follow suit later this year.

"I don't want to discuss individual players in public," said Ford when asked who could fill the vacuum. "I certainly learnt when I was here previously that there is an abundance of talent, a lot of wonderfully talented young players within the systems in Sri Lanka."

"But it is about identifying those who have got the mental toughness to go on to become successful players and consistent match winners at international level."

Sri Lanka's formidable home record took a hit last year with series defeats against the visiting Indian and Pakistan sides. The islanders then travelled to New Zealand where they were outplayed in all forms of the game in a tour soured by allegations of drinking parties and squabbling.

Sri Lanka are now down to seventh place in

the Test rankings although they do remain third in the table for the best international Twenty20 teams, partly due to their triumph in the last World T20 trophy in 2014.

WORLD CUP 2019 TARGET

Thilanga Sumathipala, president of the national cricket board, said Sri Lanka should benefit from Ford's spells with Surrey and with Kent a decade ago in the build-up to the 2019 ODI World Cup in England. "Graham knows English conditions very well and he will be able to prepare our team to win the next World Cup in Britain," Sumathipala said. Ford's first assignment will be in India next week when Sri Lanka

play the first of three T20s designed as a warm-up for their defence of the world title. Sumathipala confirmed that wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Chandimal would skipper the side in India as regular T20 captain Lasith Malinga recovers from an injury. Malinga is expected to return in time for the Asia Cup starting in Bangladesh at the end of the month, Sumathipala added. Ford, who is also a former coach of South Africa, ended his first spell in Sri Lanka in 2014 when his two-year contract expired.

He replaces Jerome Jayaratne, who had been interim coach since Marvan Atapattu quit last August. — AFP

SPOT-FIXERS BUTT, ASIF COULD PLAY IN CARIBBEAN TWENTY20

KARACHI: Spot-fixing convicts Salman Butt and Mohammad Asif yesterday said they could feature in the fourth edition of the Caribbean Premier league in July.

This would be the first international outing for the two players after they were relieved of their five-year spot fixing ban in September last year. They along with young paceman Mohammad Amir were charged of taking illegal money in return for arranging deliberate no-balls during the Lord's Test against England in 2010. All three were also jailed in UK. However, Butt said he now has permission from Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to play in the Caribbean League.

"When our bans were lifted in September last year, the PCB had cleared us to play in any league around the world, so I am eligible to play in the Caribbean league which will give me a good opportunity to regain my place in the national

team," Butt told AFP.

Asif was also keen to feature in the league. "The league will give me a better opportunity to improve my rhythm with world class players in the teams," said Asif.

The Caribbean league was initiated in 2013 on the pattern of lucrative Twenty20 league in India. While Amir returned to international cricket in Pakistan's Twenty20 and one-day series in New Zealand last month, Butt and Asif were left to play national one-day cup at domestic level.

Butt scored 536 runs in the seven one-day cup matches which ended last week, with a hundred and four half centuries while Asif managed seven wickets in as many games. However, neither Butt nor Asif were included in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) due to start in Dubai from tomorrow. Amir, whose ban was relaxed in April last year on the request of the PCB, will feature in the PSL. — AFP



SEPANG: Movistar Yamaha MotoGP rider Valentino Rossi (C) of Italy looks at his bike before the second day of 2016 MotoGP pre-season test at the Sepang International circuit yesterday. — AFP

IVORY COAST, MALI RENEW OLD RIVALRY IN CHAN SEMIS

NAIROBI: African champions Ivory Coast will attempt to keep their momentum going when they face arch-rivals Mali in the African Nations Championship semi-final in Rwanda tomorrow.

The Elephants, who have twice failed to go beyond the group stage in the biennial championship, confirmed their place with a stunning 3-0 extra-time win over another West African side Cameroon in the quarter-finals.

The victory, which came hot on the heels of their 4-1 demolition of Gabon in the group phase, proved the Ivorian dominant form under new coach Michel Dussuyer, who has been full of praise for the team's grit and performance.

"The Ivory Coast are gaining momentum," the Frenchman said after the match against Cameroon. "We still need to fight to push back our limits."

Mali also showed they were no pushovers in their 2-1 comeback win over pre-tournament favourites and former title holders, Tunisia, to reach their first-ever CHAN semi-finals.

The Eagles are expected to rely on their forwards Mamadou Sissoko and Aly Malle, who was a member of the youth team that finished runner-up to Nigeria at the FIFA U-17 World Cup Chile 2015 last November.

The match at Kigali's Stade Regional Nyamirambo will mark the 33rd meeting in international football between the two teams.

Cameroon drew 1-1 with Mali in the group phase of the 2015 African Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea. Guinea and the Democratic Republic of Congo, who face off in the first semi-final at the Amahoro national stadium today, prevailed on penalties and extra-time respectively, to qualify to the last four.

The Syli Nationale, making their debut in the competition, dominated former African Cup of Nations champions Zambia, before winning 5-4 in the penalty shoot-out after regulation and extra time.

After saving two penalties, Guinea goalkeeper Abdul Aziz Keita scored the decisive spot kick, to send his team into the semi-final.

DR Congo, boasting an array of players from the country's two dominant clubs TP Mazembe and AS Vita Club-will be without their inspirational forward Heritier Luvumbu. The AS Vita club star picked up a serious knee injury in the 2-1 extra-time winner over hosts Rwanda in the quarter-final.

The Florent Ibenge-coached side have been tight from the frontline with Luvumbu, Guy Bolingi and Meshack Elia playing the instrumental roles in their campaign. — AFP

RAINA TO CAPTAIN RAJKOT IPL TEAM, HODGE NAMED AS COACH

NEW DELHI: India limited-overs specialist Suresh Raina is to captain the new Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise in Rajkot, the team announced yesterday, while confirming Australian Brad Hodge as the side's coach.

Pune and Rajkot were unveiled as the new teams in the lucrative Twenty20 competition in December, replacing Chennai and Rajasthan, who were handed two-year suspensions for their involvement in an illegal betting scandal.

"Suresh Raina is a remarkable player with an impeccable record in all formats of the game," franchise owner Keshav Bansal said in a statement, announcing the team would be called the Gujarat Lions.

"His extensive experience combined with his great leadership skills will help us in putting together a winning strategy for the team."

Having played for three IPL teams, Hodge is familiar with the popular tournament. Back home, the 41-year-old captained Adelaide Strikers in this year's Big Bash League (BBL), while also taking on an assistant coaching role.

"We finalised Brad Hodge as the team coach on the basis of his successful contribution to the Australian national team and his excellent stint in the IPL," Bansal said.

"I am confident that our team will benefit immensely from his guidance and mentorship." — Reuters



NEW DELHI: Owner of Indian Premier League's Rajkot team and director of Intex Technologies, Keshav Bansal (R) along with cricketer Suresh Raina unveils the logo of the team at a press conference in New Delhi yesterday. The newly-formed Rajkot IPL team announced its official name as 'Gujarat Lions', making Suresh Raina its captain and Brad Hodge its coach. — AFP