

LEBRON, CAVALIERS PUSHING FOR 'BEST GAME 7'

CLEVELAND: LeBron James has watched "The Godfather" trilogy over and over during these playoffs. The Oscar-winning films about crime, family, honor - and revenge - soothe and motivate him. He can't get enough. But while he's not tired of the classic films, there's a final scene in the NBA Finals he has witnessed too many times, and if he can avoid it again Thursday night, there will be an offer he and the Cleveland Cavaliers can't refuse.

"Two of the best words ever," James said, "Game 7." On the strength of a historic performance by James and Kyrie Irving in Game 5, the Cavs saved their season and are home with a second chance to even this unpredictable series against the defending champion Golden State Warriors, who will have forward Draymond Green back from his one-game suspension for bad behavior. James has been in this spot before.

So have the Warriors. It was on June 16 last year when they closed out a short-handed Cavaliers squad in six games to win their first title since 1975. The Warriors, their families and friends partied into the early morning hours in Quicken Loans Arena, spraying champagne around their small locker room and adding another close-but-no-title entry to Cleveland's 52-year-old list of sports misery.

The Cavs, who are trying to become the first team in history to overcome a 3-1 deficit in the finals, can't bear the thought of Stephen Curry and Co. doing it to them a second time. "No matter where it gets done, stopping them is the point," J.R. Smith said. "If they win it here, it's going to hurt. If they get it there, it's going to hurt." To avoid any pain whatsoever, and pack this series up for a third trip to Northern California, the Cavs can't count on James and Irving to duplicate their effort in Game 5, when they scored 41 points apiece and had a hand in 97 as Cleveland won 112-97. —AP

TENDULKAR TO HELP PICK INDIA COACH BY VIDEO LINK

NEW DELHI: Sachin Tendulkar will tune in from abroad by video link to help choose India's new coach after he was handed the task alongside fellow batting greats Sourav Ganguly and VVS Laxman. Tendulkar, Ganguly and Laxman, dubbed the "holy trinity" by Indian media, together with senior official Sanjay Jagdale, will get to work after the flood of 57 applications was whittled down to 21, a statement said on Thursday. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) release added that Tendulkar, who is out of the country, "has confirmed his availability as and when required through video conference facilities".

The high-powered committee has less than a week to pick a coach, with their choice expected to be submitted for approval by June 22. The new coach is likely to be appointed before India's tour of the West Indies in July. "The said committee... will process and scrutinise all the applications, conduct interviews and seek presentations from candidates as the committee deems fit," BCCI secretary Ajay Shirke said in the statement. "Should the committee desire to look at all the 57 applications as well, the said will be made available to them." The BCCI hasn't named any of the candidates, but media reports suggest that the front-runners are former team director Ravi Shastri and current chief selector Sandeep Patil. — AFP



MUMBAI: This file photograph taken on November 5, 2014, shows (L/R): Former Indian cricketers Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman as they laugh along with compatriot Sachin Tendulkar (R) at the launch event of his autobiography "Playing It My Way", in Mumbai. —AFP



ST KITTS: South African cricketer Imran Tahir delivers a ball during the 6th One Day International match of the Tri-nation Series between West Indies and South Africa at the Warner Park stadium in Basseterre, Saint Kitts, on Wednesday. — AFP

TAHIR SPINS SOUTH AFRICA TO VICTORY OVER WEST INDIES

ST KITTS: Leg-spinner Imran Tahir became the first South African to claim seven wickets in a one-day international as the Proteas demolished West Indies in St Kitts on Wednesday. Tahir served up a rich variety of deliveries to claim 7-45 from nine overs as the Proteas won by 139 runs, dismissing the bewildered West Indies for 204 in 38 overs at Warner Park. Earlier, Hashim Amla scored 110 off 99 balls to notch his 23rd career ODI century, sharing an opening partnership of 182 with Quinton de Kock (71) to set the visitors on their way to a formidable 343-4. West Indies made a bright start in reply with openers Johnson Charles and Andrew Fletcher compiling a quickfire 69 before the latter holed out at deep mid-wicket for 21 from the last ball of the ninth over to give Tahir his first wicket. The result was never in doubt once Charles, who scored 49, was sent packing in the 13th over.

Tahir's haul included the scalp of World Twenty20 hero Carlos Brathwaite, who was clean bowled by a wicked googly for a golden duck. In his 58th match, Tahir became the fastest South African bowler to reach 100 ODI wickets, and the fourth quickest overall.

Tahir said he had not realised he needed only two wickets to crack the century until a pre-match phone call from his wife. "I'm grateful she reminded me," the 37-year-old said. "I'm really pleased." West Indies captain Jason

Holder offered no excuses. "We weren't good enough today and were totally outplayed. We didn't bowl well, especially the first 10 overs," he said.

South Africa's victory leaves the triangular series evenly poised, with the Proteas, West Indies and Australia all on two wins from four matches.

South Africa, thanks to two bonus points, lead the standings with 10

points, followed by Australia on nine and West Indies on eight.

The series shifts to Barbados for three more matches from Sunday and the hosts face the biggest challenge if they are to make the June 25 final.

"Probably one (victory) out of two games will be enough for us to go to the final," said South African captain AB de Villiers. —Reuters

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of play in the sixth Triangular Series match between West Indies and South Africa on Wednesday in Basseterre, St Kitts and Nevis.

South Africa Innings:		West Indies Innings:	
H. Amla c Narine b Pollard	110	A. Fletcher c Behardien b Tahir	21
Q. de Kock b Taylor	71	J. Charles c du Plessis b Shamsi	49
C. Morris c sub b C. Brathwaite	40		
F. du Plessis not out	73		
A. de Villiers c Charles b Pollard	27		
J. Duminy not out	10		
Extras (b-4 lb-2 nb-2 w-4)	12		
Total (for 4 wickets, 50 overs)	343		
Fall of wickets: 1-182 H. Amla, 2-185 Q. de Kock, 3-245 C. Morris, 4-309 A. de Villiers.			
Did not bat: F. Behardien, W. Parnell, K. Rabada, I. Tahir, T. Shamsi			
Bowling: J. Taylor 8-0-72-1 (nb-2 w-1), J. Holder 6-0-51-0, S. Narine 10-0-46-0, C. Brathwaite 10-0-69-1, S. Benn 7-0-35-0, K. Pollard 9-0-64-2 (w-3).			
D. Bravo b Parnell	11		
M. Samuels c de Kock b Tahir	24		
D. Ramdin c Morris b Shamsi	11		
K. Pollard c Behardien b Tahir	20		
J. Holder lbw b Tahir	19		
C. Brathwaite b Tahir	0		
S. Narine not out	18		
S. Benn c Shamsi b Tahir	0		
J. Taylor b Tahir	16		
Extras (b-1 lb-2 nb-2 w-10)	15		
Total (all out, 38 overs)	204		
Fall of wickets: 1-69 A. Fletcher, 2-82 J. Charles, 3-90 Da. Bravo, 4-121 D. Ramdin, 5-128 M. Samuels, 6-169 J. Holder, 7-169 C. Brathwaite, 8-170 K. Pollard, 9-182 S. Benn, 10-204 J. Taylor.			
Bowling: W. Parnell 6-0-43-1 (nb-2), K. Rabada 7-0-46-0 (w-2), I. Tahir 9-0-45-7, C. Morris 7-0-26-0 (w-1), T. Shamsi 9-0-41-2 (w-3).			
Result: South Africa won by 139 runs.			