

BLACK CAPS OUT FOR REVENGE AGAINST AUSTRALIA

AUCKLAND: New Zealand will seek revenge against an understrength Australia in the one-day series beginning in Auckland tomorrow after a humiliating whitewash in the return fixture last year. Australia dominated the Black Caps 3-0 to hoist the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy in December and coach Mike Hesson said his team were keen to make amends on home soil.

"We only played them a short time ago and we weren't at our best. We probably

didn't have the resources that we've got available now," he said. "It's a huge series for us, an exciting series for us and playing in front of some big home crowds is going to be really important for us." Australia's top priority at the moment is the upcoming tour of India, where they have not won a Test since 2004, and they have rested vice-captain Dave Warner and batsman Usman Khawaja for the New Zealand series. Captain Steve Smith is also out with

an ankle injury, forcing wicketkeeper Matthew Wade to don the skipper's armband and leading to youngster Sam Heazlett's call-up.

The Black Caps will not miss Warner in particular, who was their chief tormenter in the December series, amassing 299 runs at 99.66 from the three matches.

Australia, the world's top ranked ODI team, have added Aaron Finch and Shaun Marsh to the batting to face New Zealand,

who are ranked fourth. The Australians are coming off a 4-1 series win over Pakistan and, while they appear a weakened side on paper, Hesson said they could not be underestimated.

"They've still got plenty of good players," he said. But Hesson said the hosts were buoyed by their own recent success against Bangladesh in all three forms of the game, particularly since their pace attack finally showed signs it was firing in

the final Test. The Black Caps also have a stronger batting line-up than the last time they played Australia thanks to the introduction of Ross Taylor and Neil Broom. The classy Taylor missed the last series due to eye surgery while Broom has impressed since being recalled against Bangladesh after six years in the wilderness.

The second ODI will be in Napier on Thursday, with the third in Hamilton Sunday. — AFP

WEIR SLAMS AUSSIE COACH WHO CALLED HIM A 'DISGRACE'

LONDON: Six-time Paralympic champion David Weir has revealed he called time on his Great Britain career after being labelled a "disgrace to the country" by British Athletics' wheelchair racing coach Jenni Banks. Weir reiterated Friday he will not represent Great Britain again and so won't end his career at the 2017 IPC World Championships in London as he spoke about his row with Australian coach Banks for the first time.

The flare-up took place during last year's Paralympic Games after the British team bowed out in the heats of the 4x400 metres T53/54 relay heats in Rio.

"Obviously the relay didn't go to plan. I wanted us to win a medal, I wanted us to get to the final, I thought we were good enough to win a medal," he said. "At the last minute I changed my gloves, I felt I was getting more grip and power, but it didn't work. I just didn't get any power, I couldn't pick my speed up."

Weir added: "I literally came off the track and she came running over and accused me of sabotaging the team and doing it on purpose. She said I was a disgrace to the country and told me if I didn't want to do the relay I should have said so."

"There were a few words thrown back and forwards. A lot of the other international teams saw what went on and were absolutely disgusted with the way she spoke to me."

'MOUTHING OFF'

Weir said he spoke to Britain's Paralympic head coach Paula Dunn immediately after the incident. "Paula said 'are you OK? Don't worry about the relay, just

focus on the marathon now,'" Weir explained. "She didn't realise what had just happened. I had to tell her and then Jenni Banks came running over and started mouthing off again."

"I asked her to go away again because it was a private conversation, so there were a few heated words backwards and forwards, and that was it. I didn't talk to her again. It's not just me she's done it to. It's other athletes who have complained about her in the past," said Weir at a promotional event for April's London Marathon British Athletics said Banks was unavailable for comment but released a statement acknowledging there had indeed been a row. "We can confirm there was a frank exchange of views between an athlete and the relay coach following the race when the GB men's wheelchair team failed to qualify for the final," the statement read.

"We can also confirm that we have met with David Weir to receive first hand his feedback on his experiences in Rio, and that we are working to ensure we learn from these experiences ahead of future team events." As for reports, denied by British Athletics, that Banks had thrown his racing wheelchair across a room, Weir said: "I laughed when I heard about it. I thought it was hilarious. I didn't know she had thrown my chair until the day I was flying home," he said.

"We still don't know if she did it or not. But other athletes saw it—international athletes saw it as well." Weir plans to race in the London Marathon for a 17th successive year in April and win the race for the seventh time. — AFP



PORT ELIZABETH: South Africa's opening batsman Hashim Amla (l) is watched by Sri Lanka's wicketkeeper Dinesh Chandimal (r) as he plays a shot during their One Day International (ODI) cricket match against Sri Lanka at St George's Park yesterday, in Port Elizabeth. — AFP

PARNELL, TAHIR SHINE IN SOUTH AFRICA ODI WIN

PORT ELIZABETH: Wayne Parnell and Imran Tahir took three wickets each to set up a comfortable eight-wicket win for South Africa in the first one-day international at St George's Park yesterday. Sri Lanka struggled to 181 all out, with Kusal Mendis the only batsman to shine for the tourists, making 62. Left-arm seamer Parnell took three for 48 while leg-spinner Tahir showed superb control in a strong westerly wind, taking three for 26. "Today was a little more special for me," said man of the match Tahir. "It is my wedding anniversary and this is absolutely for my wife. She asked me to take five wickets and win man of the match. I didn't take five wickets but I am very happy with my performance."

Hashim Amla made 57 and Faf du Plessis 55 not out as South Africa cruised to victory with 15.4 overs to spare.

Parnell plunged Sri Lanka into early trouble by taking wickets with the first balls of the second and fourth overs after South African captain AB de Villiers won the toss and decided to bowl.

Although Dinesh Chandimal and Mendis put on 72 for the third wicket, Tahir ripped the heart out of the middle order, taking three wickets in four overs. "It was a great bowling performance which put them on the back foot," said De Villiers. "The new ball bowlers bowled with a lot of intensity up front, which is exactly what we want from them, and Immy (Tahir) was a great impact bowler in the middle overs again."

De Villiers praised Amla and Quinton de Kock (34), who put on 71 for South Africa's first wicket.

"Although Sri Lanka's total was well below par, it was still a tricky target on a pitch which was slow, two-paced and kept really low."

"It was more like Sri Lankan conditions and their spinners could have caused some problems. But Quinton and Hash got us off to a great

SCOREBOARD

PORT ELIZABETH: Scoreboard yesterday in the first one-day international between South Africa and Sri Lanka at St. George's Park.

Sri Lanka		South Africa	
Niroshan Dickwella lbw b Parnell	1	Quinton de Kock c Weerakkody b Sandakan	34
Sandun Weerakkody c Amla b Parnell	5	Hashim Amla c and b Gunaratne	57
Kusal Mendis lbw b Tahir	62	Faf du Plessis not out	55
Dinesh Chandimal b Tahir	22	AB de Villiers not out	30
Upul Tharanga c Duminy b Tahir	6	Extras: (2lb, 2w, 5 pen)	9
Dhananjaya de Silva c du Plessis b Parnell	28	TOTAL: (for 2 wickets)	185
Asela Gunaratne run out	10	Overs: 34.2	
Nuwan Kulasekara c de Kock b Rabada	17	Fall of wickets: 1-71, 2-131	
Jeffrey Vandersay lbw b Morris	8	Did not bat: JP Duminy, David Miller, Chris Morris, Wayne Parnell, Andile Phehlukwayo, Kagiso Rabada, Imran Tahir.	
Suranga Lakmal b Morris	3	Bowling: Nuwan Kulasekara 5-0-20-0, Suranga Lakmal 6-1-29-0, Dhananjaya de Silva 2-0-9-0, Jeffrey Vandersay 7-0-51-0, Lakshan Sandakan 8-0-35-1, Asela Gunaratne 5-0-19-1, Kusal Mendis 1.2-0-15-0.	
Lakshan Sandakan not out	2	Result: South Africa won by 8 wickets.	
Extras: (5lb, 12w)	17	Series: South Africa leads five-match series 1-0.	
TOTAL: (all out)	181		
Overs: 48.3			
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-14, 3-86, 4-99, 5-102, 6-126, 7-155, 8-170, 9-170, 10-181.			

start, which made it easy for Faf and me," said De Villiers, who made 30 not out.

Sri Lankan captain Upul Tharanga was disappointed. "Although Dinesh and Mendis had a partnership, we never picked up from losing early wickets," he said. "It was a slow pitch but our spinners did not control the ball much. We need to improve in batting and bowling."

Niroshan Dickwella, man of the series in Sri Lanka's Twenty20 triumph, made only one

before he went back on his stumps and was leg before wicket to Parnell. New cap Sandun Weerakkody slashed at the first ball of Parnell's next over and was caught at first slip for five.

Mendis, who had made only 87 runs in seven innings since hitting 58 in the second innings of the first Test at the same venue last month, hit ten boundaries in his 94-ball innings. His first seven scoring strokes were fours, mainly struck fluently on the off side. — AFP



David Weir

'OLD SCHOOL' CUPER LOOKING TO RESTORE EGYPT TO FORMER GLORIES

PORT-GENTIL: Today's Africa Cup of Nations quarter-final between Egypt and Morocco is set to be a classic battle of managerial minds, bringing together a two-time winner of the trophy in Herve Renard and wily Hector Cuper.

While Frenchman Renard has become a fixture on the African scene, and a successful one at that, the 61-year-old Argentine Cuper is sampling a major international tournament for the first time. Appointed in 2015, Cuper was charged with the daunting task of making the record seven-time African champions a force again. A first appearance at the World Cup since 1990 is, he has admitted, the "big objective."

But returning to the Cup of Nations for the first time since they won a third consecutive trophy in 2010 came first. Cuper did that and he has steered them through to the knockout phase by making the Pharaohs the kind of side that nobody likes playing against.

Egypt did not concede a goal in the group stage in Gabon, following a 0-0 draw with Mali by winning 1-0 against Uganda and Ghana, both times thanks to flashes of inspiration from star man Mohamed Salah.

"Now modern football is always like attacking football, full-backs always high, but he is a bit different, a bit old-school," Egypt's Ahmed Elmohamady, of Premier League Hull City, told AFP.

Hazem el Hawary is an Egyptian FA board member and the head of the Pharaohs' delegation in Gabon, just as he was when they won the 1998 Cup of Nations in Burkina Faso.

He has seen some great Egyptian sides over the last two decades and admits this one is nothing like as talented, but claims the coach can give them the edge.

"Everybody can watch what he is doing. He teaches the players organisa-

tion, he has a system that does not change and the players are getting used to it," El Hawary told AFP.

"That is why we keep improving. Everybody says now Egypt plays with a system. They are not playing haphazard. Our results in the last one year and a half are super."

FINALLY A WINNER?

Cuper has overseen 14 wins and just three defeats in 20 games in charge, while Egypt have let in a miserly seven goals in that time.

They no longer play attractive, flowing football, but supporters just want to see their team win again after several years in which social and political strife has had a negative impact on the game.

El Hawary adds: "We like the Brazilian style. People like to see talented football with lots of goals but with Hector Cuper it is different. He plays practical football which makes you win, so people are happy with him."

Ironically Cuper, a former central defender, has not been seen as a winner in his coaching career.

He was the man who lost a Copa del Rey final and a Cup Winners' Cup final with Mallorca and two UEFA Champions League finals with Valencia. He also came second in Serie A with Inter Milan in 2002. More recently he has managed Georgia and modest clubs in Greece, Turkey, Spain and the United Arab Emirates. But this globetrotter now appears settled in Egypt. In front of the media, Cuper speaks Spanish and his assistant Mahmoud Fayed translates for him, but Elmohamady insists he has no problems getting his message across to the team. "He speaks some Arabic so it's ok. He is like an Egyptian man now. He has been for two years in Egypt and he can speak to the players in different situations like if you have problems outside football." — AFP

BOLT TURNS IN MEDAL, SAYS 'RULES ARE RULES'

KINGSTON: Jamaican sprint superstar Usain Bolt insisted that the loss of one of his nine Olympic gold medals because of the doping sanction of relay teammate Nesta Carter won't tarnish his legacy.

"I am disappointed based on losing a medal, but it won't take away from what I have done throughout my career, because I have won my individual events and that's the key thing," Bolt said while attending the opening of a high school gym in Santa Cruz, Jamaica.

Bolt said he had already handed back the 4x100m relay gold from the 2008 Beijing Games, which the International Olympic Committee officially withdrew from Jamaica this week because of Carter's positive drug test. "I am not fully happy about the situation but rules are rules," Bolt said, noting that Carter and Jamaica's athletics

authorities are planning to appeal the sanction.

"We have to sit and see how that works out," he said. Bolt, Carter, Asafa Powell and Michael Frater were on the Jamaican relay squad that was disqualified after Carter tested positive for the banned substance methylhexanamine in a re-test of Beijing samples. All of them surrendered their medals on Friday. The loss of the relay gold deprives Bolt of one of his "triple triples"—he won gold in the 100m, 200m and the 4x100m at Beijing and repeated the unprecedented feat in London in 2012 and again in Rio last year. While conceding that the term "triple-triple" had "a nice ring to it" Bolt said he was looking forward.

"What can you do?" he said. "I've done all I wanted in the sport, I have really impacted the sport, I've really accomplished a lot so for me, I

can't complain," he added. He emphasized that his priority was to avoid distractions in order to train properly in the coming months. "This is my last season and I want to go out on a winning note," said Bolt, who is heading for engagements in Australia next week said his immediate plans center on "just training" for competition.

Bolt, who is reportedly willing to contribute to funding of Carter's appeal, said he had not yet spoken to Carter since news of the lost gold medal, but stressed that there was "no bad blood" between them. "I know it must be very hard, must be rough on him, I know how social media can be and I know how Jamaica is. So hopefully there is some love (being shown towards Carter). "It's rough, things happen in life for reasons no one knows," he said. "I hope he doesn't take it to heart." — AFP