

WARNER SAYS 'NO CONTRACTS, CAN'T PLAY' IN CA DIG

SYDNEY: Vice-captain David Warner has attacked Cricket Australia's handling of a pay dispute and once again raised the spectre of an Ashes series boycott by players later this year. The feisty opener has not backed away from claims he made last month of a potential players' strike during the showpiece home series against England, starting in November. CA has threatened not to pay contracted players beyond the June 30 expiry of their current financial deal if they do not accept a new offer. But Warner has gone

on the front foot, claiming the governing body had prosecuted its argument primarily through media briefings. "If we are unemployed, we have no contracts, we can't play," he told Fairfax Media Monday in England at the Champions Trophy. "We are pretty sure that they will come to an agreement. But, as you know, we are going to be unemployed come July 1. So we have to wait and see." Warner said beyond "a couple of emails" CA management had not engaged with its contracted players.

"It is only what we hear in the media and that's how CA have been driving it the whole way," he said. "They have been using the media as a voice and we get the message from there." Warner again pledged his "full support" to fellow players and affirmed he is "100 per cent" behind the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA). "They are doing a great job for us," he said of the players' union's efforts in the dispute. "From a players' point of view, we are pretty vocal and upbeat," Warner added

that he remains hopeful a new Memorandum of Understanding can be struck between now and June 30. "It is a big thing that we could be unemployed, but from us, our job is to play cricket, focus on winning the (Champions Trophy) tournament and not let our country down," he said. CA is determined to scrap revenue-sharing after 20 years, saying more funds were needed for the game's grassroots, and that the offer it has on the table provided handsomely for players.

But the ACA is equally resolved to keep revenue-sharing, saying the system does not need fixing. With no end in sight to the impasse, the ACA has disclosed plans to form a new business to help male and female players directly negotiate sponsorship deals. Establishing "The Cricketers' Brand", designed to manage and commercialise player's intellectual property (IP) rights, was necessary due to "the uncertainty of all parties regarding IP matters should the players be unemployed post June 30," it recently said. —AFP

PREVIEW

STEVEN FINN EAGER TO SEIZE CHAMPIONS TROPHY CHANCE

BIRMINGHAM: England fast bowler Steven Finn hopes to make the most of his late call-up to Champions Trophy duty when the tournament hosts face New Zealand in Cardiff on Tuesday. Finn was left out of England's original squad for a tournament featuring the world's top eight one-day international teams. But the 28-year-old Middlesex quick was recalled Sunday after pace bowling all-rounder Chris Woakes broke down with a side strain after during England's opening eight-wicket win over Bangladesh at the Oval on Thursday. "It's always frustrating when you are left out of squads, but you have to roll with the punches," Finn told reporters in Cardiff on Sunday. "If you get too down-hearted it can affect you more. I just focused on keeping my head up and fighting my way back into the team."

He added: "It's obviously very sad for Chris Woakes, who is a good friend of mine, but I am glad that I've got the call."

Finn could well go straight into England's XI in Cardiff if, as happened against Bangladesh, they opt to play just the one spinner. He sealed his return to international duty on the back of taking two wickets in front of the selectors for the second-string England Lions in a 144-run win over South Africa A at Northampton on Saturday.

'PRESSURE'

"I knew James Whitaker and Mick Newell were there watching me," said Finn. "You feel that pressure, I suppose, knowing they're watching you to call you up for this game. But that is no different from every time I pull on an England or Lions shirt."

New Zealand endured a frustrating wicket in their Group A opener against Australia when seemingly well-placed for victory. "The nature of this tournament is that every game is basically knockout," said New Zealand captain Kane Williamson whose superb hundred was ultimately trumped by the rain.

"We played some good cricket and we can't control the weather, although it is a

little bit frustrating." England's Joe Root, another of the world's leading batsmen, made a century too in his first innings of the tournament against Bangladesh. But while the sometimes excitable Root can be goaded into error, Williamson rarely looks anything other than serene at the crease. "He's arguably the calmest man alive," said New Zealand seamer Trent Boult of Williamson.

"He gets more flustered on what to wear on a dinner date with his missus than he does on the field."

The last time these two sides met in a 50-over International Cricket Council event, New Zealand inflicted a humiliating eight-wicket defeat upon England in Wellington during the 2015 World Cup. Not content with dismissing England for 123, the Blackcaps raced to their target in a mere 12.2 overs, with then skipper Brendon McCullum hitting 77 off just 25 balls, including seven sixes.

One consolation for England is that McCullum has since retired from international cricket.

Today's match takes place against the backdrop of a terror attack in London on Saturday that killed seven people and injured dozens more England pacemen Mark Wood and Liam Plunkett had to head down to Cardiff by bus after their cars were parked in a police exclusion zone near their London hotel.

Finn insisted England were determined to play on following terror attacks that have struck both Manchester and London in the past two weeks, amid security reassurance from the International Cricket Council. "We have been briefed on how we are going to be protected, so we're very comfortable that there is a ring of steel around us and everyone who is in the ground will be safe," said Finn.

"We are obviously sad about it, and send our condolences to those affected by it. It is a sorry state of affairs."

"But we will keep playing cricket and be defiant in the face of it and hope to put a smile on people's faces here today." — AFP



BIRMINGHAM: India's Yuvraj Singh bats during the ICC Champions Trophy match between India and Pakistan at Edgbaston in Birmingham, England, Sunday. — AP

CRICKET

KOHLI AND YUVRAJ LEAD INDIA ROUT OF PAKISTAN

BIRMINGHAM: India captain Virat Kohli and Yuvraj Singh made Pakistan pay for fluffing catches with quickfire fifties as the holders launched their Champions Trophy title-defence with a 124-run thrashing of their arch-rivals at Edgbaston on Sunday. After India made 319 for three in 48 overs, the third rain stoppage of the match left Pakistan with a revised target of 289 in 41 overs when play resumed in bright sunshine.

But Pakistan, rarely up with the stiff run-rate, finished on 164, with injured last man Wahab Riaz unable to bat as India won with 44 balls to spare. Kohli, who on Saturday had dismissed reports of a rift with India coach Anil Kumble, was equally contemptuous of Pakistan's attack during a blistering innings of 81 not out off just 68 balls that included six fours and three sixes. Left-hander Yuvraj, named man-of-the-match for his game-changing innings, smashed a rapid 53 while helping Kohli add 93 for the third wicket in just 59 balls.

That was not the end of the run spree, with Hardik Pandya hitting sixes off the first three balls of left-arm spinner Imad Wasim's last over of the innings. India smashed 72 off their final four overs as Pakistan's attack wilted. Rohit Sharma (91) and Shikhar Dhawan (68) laid the platform for a big total with an opening stand of 136. "I got lucky and got dropped and I capitalised," said Yuvraj at the presentation ceremony. Meanwhile an admiring Kohli, one of the world's leading batsmen, said of Yuvraj: "I felt like a club batter next to him. He's a game changer with the bat."

Mohammad Amir was the pick of Pakistan's attack with none for 32 in 8.1 overs. But fellow left-arm fast bowler Wahab was hugely expensive, his wicketless 8.4 overs costing 87 runs.

Wahab's day was summed up when he was unable to complete his ninth over after falling awkwardly in his delivery stride. Pakistan captain Sarfraz Ahmed said he had "no regrets" over his decision to field first.

'LOST THE PLOT'

"We were in control for 40 overs but we lost the plot in the last eight overs," the wicket-keeper added after what was the opening Group B match for both the Asian giants in a tournament featuring the world's top eight one-day international teams.

"The worrying thing for me, and it has been for a period of time, is we just do the basics wrong," said Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur. "We dropped simple catches, we don't run well enough between wickets," added the concerned South African after his first direct involvement in an India-Pakistan match, world cricket's most high-profile fixture. Before play, the teams officials and a crowd of 24,156 — a record for an Edgbaston ODI-observed a minute's silence for the victims of Saturday's London terror attack that

SCOREBOARD			
BIRMINGHAM, United Kingdom: Completed scoreboard in the Group B Champions Trophy match between India and Pakistan at Edgbaston on Sunday:			
India			
R. Sharma run out (Babar Azam/Sarfraz Ahmed)	91	Babar Azam c Jadeja b Yadav	8
S. Dhawan c Azhar Ali b Shadab Khan	68	Mohammad Hafeez c Kumar b Jadeja	33
V. Kohli not out	81	Shoaib Malik run out (Jadeja)	15
Yuvraj Singh lbw b Hasan Ali	53	Sarfraz Ahmed c Dhoni b Pandya	15
H. Pandya not out	20	Imad Wasim c Jadhav b Pandya	0
Extras (lb2, w2, nb2)	6	Shadab Khan not out	14
Total (3 wks, 48 overs)	319	Mohammad Amir c Jadhav b Yadav	9
Did not bat: MS Dhoni, K Jadhav, R Jadeja, B Kumar, U Yadav, J Bumrah		Hasan Ali c Dhawan b Yadav	0
Fall of wickets: 1-136 (Dhawan), 2-192 (Sharma), 3-285 (Yuvraj)		Wahab Riaz absent hurt	-
Bowling: Amir 8.1-1-32-0; Wasim 9.1-0-66-0 (1w); Ali 10-0-70-1 (1nb); Riaz 8.4-0-87-0 (1nb, 1w); Shadab 10-0-52-1; Shoaib 2-0-10-0		Extras (lb2, w6)	8
Pakistan (revised target: 289 in 41 overs)		Total (all out, 33.4 overs)	164
Azhar Ali c Pandya b Jadedja	50	Fall of wickets: 1-47 (Shehzad), 2-61 (Babar), 3-91 (Azhar), 4-114 (Shoaib), 5-131 (Hafeez), 6-135 (Wasim), 7-151 (Sarfraz), 8-164 (Amir), 9-164 (Hasan)	
Ahmed Shehzad lbw b Kumar	12	Bowling: Kumar 5-1-23-1 (2w); Yadav 7.4-1-30-3 (1w); Bumrah 5-0-23-0;	
		Pandya 8-0-43-2 (3w); Jadeja 8-0-43-2;	
		Result: India won by 124 runs (DLS method)	
		Man-of-the-match: Yuvraj Singh (IND)	

round at long-off, dropped the two-handed catch off Shadab. Hasan eventually had Yuvraj lbw on review but it was all too late. Kohli had made 43 when he was missed by substitute Fahim Ashraf who grassed a top-edged hook off Wahab. A blizzard of boundaries followed, with Kohli flat-batting Hasan down the ground for six to complete his fifty. Pakistan opener Azhar make exactly 50 before he was caught at deep square leg by Hardik Pandya off left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja to leave his side in trouble at 91 for three. No member of India's attack leaked runs the way Wahab had done, with paceman Umesh Yadav, who took three for 30 in 7.4 overs, ending the match when he dismissed Hasan for a duck. —AFP

Champions Trophy table			
BIRMINGHAM, United Kingdom: Champions Trophy table after the Group B match between India and Pakistan at Edgbaston on Sunday (played, won, lost, tied, no result, points, net run-rate):			
Group A			
England	1	1	0 0 0 2 +0.40
Australia	1	0	0 0 1 1 n/a
New Zealand	1	0	0 0 1 1 n/a
Bangladesh	1	0	1 0 0 0 -0.40
Results			
Jun 01, The Oval: England bt Bangladesh by 8 wks			
Jun 02, Edgbaston: Australia v New Zealand, no result			
Remaining Fixtures			
Jun 05: Australia v Bangladesh, The Oval (1230 GMT)			
Jun 06: England v New Zealand, Cardiff (0930 GMT)			
Jun 09: New Zealand v Bangladesh, Cardiff (0930 GMT)			
Jun 10: England v Australia, Edgbaston (0930 GMT)			
Group B			
India	1	1	0 0 0 2 +3.02
South Africa	1	1	0 0 0 2 +1.92
Sri Lanka	1	0	1 0 0 0 -1.92
Final			
Jun 18: The Oval (0930 GMT)			



BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan's Mohammad Amir winces in pain after an injury during the ICC Champions Trophy match between India and Pakistan at Edgbaston in Birmingham. — AP