

US OPEN
OSAKA CRASHES OUT



Defending champion Naomi Osaka was eliminated from the US Open in the fourth round with a 7-5, 6-4 loss to No. 13 Belinda Bencic. Osaka was visited by medical personnel in the second set and took some type of tablet.

CARIBBEAN DIARY

Salute that!
Cottrell a hit
among mates

KEEPING HIS sniper-gun aside, Dunstan Devlin is prowling the stairs that take you to the West Indies dressing room. He's restless and, by his own admission, angry. Not just that the hosts are reeling, but he feels his close friend, Sheldon Cottrell, would have made a massive difference. "Did you see the way we bowled? Wouldn't Sheldon been better? It's his home ground and he's not playing. It's a tragedy," he fumes.

Devlin and Cottrell go back a long way. The left-arm seamer was his immediate senior when he joined the Jamaica Defence Force. "I was nervous, and he says come on, we gonna rock. I was just 23 and I hadn't played any competitive cricket. Now I'm a regular for the club, and the reason is Cottrell."

Cottrell is the man who salutes after taking wickets and the man who blew England in the ODIs earlier this year. The Defence Camp is just a few kilometres from the stadium, guarded of course, but not as heavily as it is in India. There's no 'trespassers will be shot' signages or barbed wires, the walls don't touch the sky, you can see the quarters from outside, though you can't just walk in or take photographs.

Deep inside the camp is a ground, where Devlin, Cottrell and others play cricket. "Don't tell him, but he hardly comes for practice. He just turns up for the match and starts bowling. He's just incredibly talented. But he will always be there watching us, helping us out. He's a good soccer player too. A defender you can't beat," Devlin says.

His colleague Floyd Junior agrees. "He's like a bull. Very strong. Have you seen him taking push-ups? He takes them for fun, 100, 200, 300... He always wins the push-up competition, and of course not a bad sprinter too," he says.

Cottrell's cricket was plunging to obscurity when he joined the force a decade ago. "But one day he was watching our senior team practise, and one of the players asked him if he were interested. He jumped in and started knocking the hell out of him. That's the reason they don't him bowl in the nets. They're scared," says Junior.

With Cottrell amidst them, JDF, as their acronym goes, emerged as a force to be reckoned with, culminating in their league triumph in 2017. "He took some 40 wickets in eight or nine games. As he was also playing for Jamaica, he didn't have much time. But he ensured that whenever he was free, he would come and play with us. We won the league after some 30 years," Junior says.

There are several versions of how he started his salute routine. "There was a time when he was depressed that he was not getting into the Jamaica team. Then one day he got the call from the selector, and we sought a party. It was during the party that he told us about his plans to salute after getting wickets. For he says he wouldn't have got anywhere in cricket but for the JDF," remembers Junior.

Devlin has another version: "There was a tough superior who used to ask him to salute every time he saw him. So during one of the net sessions, he clean-bowled him and then saluted him. I have heard he never played cricket again."

There are other stories of his bravado too—like nabbing a bunch of gangsters in Downtown Kingston, a task the police couldn't accomplish, saving lives during hurricanes. "He's a very serious guy when it comes to his work, doesn't make any excuse for drills and still does any job he's asked to."

Floyd and Cottrell have been on stadium duties several times, guarding the dressing room. This time, though, he was expecting him to spot his friend inside the dressing room. "It's unfair," quips Devlin.

—SANDIP G

Debate on
concussion
rule after
Bravo's
substitution

SANDIP G
KINGSTON, SEPTEMBER 2

OFF THE first ball of the 17th over, Darren Bravo crunched a lovely boundary off Jasprit Bumrah, suggesting he was not carrying any wounds, mental or physical, from Jasprit Bumrah's vicious bouncer that had disassembled his helmet.

However, before he took guard for the next ball, he hunched down on the ground and began to drag himself to the pavilion. He had been cleared in the morning to resume his innings after the blow late on Sunday evening, but as is often the case with a concussion, the symptoms could relapse the next day. As it was with Australia's Steve Smith when he was felled by a Jofra Archer's bouncer at Lord's.

But in the middle of his innings, Bravo felt dizzy and disoriented, and later after further medical inspection, was deemed "unfit to bat", and Jermaine Blackwood was named the concussion substitute, reigniting debates on whether substitutes should be allowed for concussion, a like-for-like replacement as decided by the match referee.

While most of the cricketing firmament agrees that concussion is a serious condition, and cricket was in fact late in realising its dangers, they differ on the substitution rule. Some feel that it's harsh on bowlers, who are more prone to injuries in the middle of the match. Like West Indies paceman Shannon Gabriel in this match, and Miguel Cummins in the Antigua Test, leaving Jason Holder and Kemar Roach with the bulk of the bowling burden.

But, that's a debate for another day. The question here is not about the unfairness to the bowlers, but why batsmen are getting hit on the heads so frequently nowadays. In the space of three weeks, we have already seen two substitutes — Marnus Labuschagne and Blackwood.

Former West Indies fast bowler Andy Roberts puts it down to technical ineptitude. "Batsmen getting hit was common in our days, but never on the head, despite the licence to bowl as many bouncers as we want. It was because their techniques were better. There was no helmet, so they weren't pampered. They watched the ball, and there were some terrific hookers and pullers," he had told this newspaper.

Bravo, for one, clearly didn't watch the ball. He neither ducked, weaved or swayed from the line of the short ball, a sharp delivery that seemed to follow him. Tough as the delivery was, he completely took his eyes off it, as it cannoned onto the helmet. He was immediately attended to by the support staff and seemed quite comfortable throughout the remainder of the day.

Even the remarkable Smith was caught off-guard for a fleeting moment. He was crouching, but a split second's indecision was all it took for the Archer rip-snorter to smash into his neck. A better technique and awareness would have helped both batsmen, though their replacements did jump in gleefully. Labuschagne made the best of the lucky break, scoring 59, 74 and 80 in his next three outings. Blackwood, whose last Test came as far back as 2017, too began briskly, taking on the Indian bowlers with panache. So while debates rage on over the rule, the substitutes seem to be making the most of it.

Scoreboard (Lunch, Day 4):

India first innings 416 in 140.1 ovs. Windies first innings 117 in 47.1 ovs. India 2nd innings 168/4 dec in 54.4 ovs.

WEST INDIES 2ND INNINGS 146/4 in 41 overs [J Campbell c Kohli b Shami 16, K Brathwaite c Pant b I Sharma 3, D Bravo retired hurt 23, S Brooks not out 36, R Chase lbw b Jadeja 12, S Hetmyer c Agarwal b I Sharma 1, Blackwood not out 34, Extras 21; FoW: 1-9 (Brathwaite, 2.3 ov), 2-37 (Campbell, 7.4 ov), 2-55* (Bravo, retired not out), 3-97 (Chase, 27.5 ov), 4-98 (Hetmyer, 28.4 ov); Bowling: I Sharma 10-3-29-2, J Bumrah 8-3-22-0, Shami 12-1-44-1, R Jadeja 10-1-33-1, H Vihari 1-0-3-0]



Darren Bravo was substituted on Monday after being hit on the helmet by Jasprit Bumrah on Sunday evening. *BCCI*

Connoisseur's delight

Be it old-timers or youngsters, everyone in the Caribbean has been left smitten by the Bumrah phenomenon



EXPRESS IN WEST INDIES

SANDIP G
KINGSTON, SEPTEMBER 2

A GROUP of middle-aged men are gathered around a makeshift drinks table in a corner of the George Headley Stand, drowning the misery of another West Indies collapse in the rum of their choice. "Yeah man, they makin' us drink more. You can't watch them without some rum. They givin' us headache. This man Bumrah, he's like rum, hits you fast," says Ralph, a 65-year-old.

Soon the discussion drifts into which brand of rum Bumrah characterises. "I think he's like Appleton, smooth, it's like drinking juice, you won't realise it until the head starts spinning," says Regal, who claims he hasn't missed a Test since home boy Patrick Patterson battered the Englishmen in 1986. He's baffled by the economy of Bumrah's run-up. "How can you generate such speed from this run-up? You think he's harmless like your old fellas, but then he hits you. He's got a lot of power, eh? He Indian? Is he human?" He then arrives at a firm conclusion: "He's an Indian with a Jamaican soul."

But Ralph, much more a fan-boy, disagrees with the Appleton comparison. He says Bumrah's more like another local brand that leaves a bitter aftertaste. "He's like Coruba, man. Very hard to drink even with juice. It's worse than cough syrup. Three shots and you're down. You wake up the next morning, you won't realise what has happened," he says.

A third one, Joseph, negates both. To him, Bumrah is like Wray and Nephew, a headier local brew, notorious for its hangover. "The headache never leaves you. The next three-four days, you won't feel like drinking it again. Let me tell you, these boys wouldn't want to face Bumrah again in their lifetime. He give them hangover they will never forget," he says, evoking laughs and approval from his friends.



Jamaican cricket watchers have gone to the extent of comparing Bumrah with their favourite tippie. 'He's like rum, hits you fast,' one observer said. *AP*

In Jamaica, whatever that amuses them, whether it's a fancy car or a sportsman, they compare it to two intoxicants — rum and marijuana. It's also a sign of approval that they like what they're watching. They behold him amusingly, even reverentially. The qualities they see in their heroes are not technical, rather it's the more human qualities they admire and applaud. Like bravado, toughness or even a bit of quirkiness. There is also some ganja talk. You can hear people wondering: "What stuff he's smoking, man? Is it the one your sadhus smoke? Give our boys some of it too. They need some of it when batting." The logic being in marijuana's influence, you keep doing the same thing for a long time, as if in a trance.

To Kelly, one of the scorers for the Test, Bumrah poses an occupational hazard like few others. He takes wickets in piles and induces typos.

"He gets wickets with almost every ball. So you have to be really fast. My fingers are still aching." Contrary to what commentators make us believe, a batsman who gets out for zero troubles the scorers more than someone who has scored a hundred.

"It's a commentator's cliché. First we have to enter the details of the previous batsman, how he got out, the over he got out, how many balls he has faced. We have to make at least nine entries. And if another batsman gets out, we have to go through all this process again. So imagine our trouble when someone's picking a hat-trick. I hate hat-tricks," Kelly says.

She was plunging into a post-lunch nap when Bumrah ripped through West Indies on the second day. "My hands have never worked faster, yet a couple of entries were wrong, and I had to cross it. Four crosses and you have to take a new sheet, which means I would have to do it all over again. One thing that made my job easier was that he did it all by himself. We didn't have to find who the fielder was!"

But there's fan-girl inside her who wants a Bumrah autograph on the scoresheet. "My son likes him. He watches a lot of IPL. He wears a Bumrah jersey too."

Almost everyone wants one. Whenever he walks on and off the pitch, the stands converge to the flight of stairs that lead to the dressing room, pleading him for autographs and jerseys. Bumrah can't oblige all, and when he's short of time, he flashes his gracious smile, leaving a lot smitten.

yourself, you can try whatever you want to do. That gives you a lot of confidence, not only me but each and every bowler is being backed by him so much."

Roach: Unlucky but happy

"Unlucky" to have missed out on a hat-trick by a whisker, West Indies pacer Kemar Roach said he was happy to just be in contention for the feat against a strong Indian batting line-up. After dismissing opener Mayank Agarwal (5) before lunch on the third day of the second Test, Roach came out firing on all cylinders and removed KL Rahul and skipper Virat Kohli off successive balls to be on the verge of a hat-trick in India's second innings on Sunday. Ajinkya Rahane inside-edged the next ball, but it missed the stumps by an inch. "Inside edge and missing the stumps — a bit unlucky but I am pretty happy with what happened. It was a good feeling. Obviously, the Indian batting line-up is very strong, so to be on a hat-trick against those guys is obviously a good feeling." **PTI**

'Experience of bowling with Dukes in England helped me'

Kingston: India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah said experience of bowling with duke balls in English conditions has helped him to succeed in the ongoing Test tour of the West Indies. Bumrah, who has been in sensational form, claimed a five-wicket haul (5/7) in the first Test in Antigua. He followed it up by becoming only the third Indian to take a Test hat-trick in the ongoing second Test here.

Bumrah returned with excellent figures of 6/27 from 12.2 overs to help India bundle out the West Indies for 117 in their innings.

"I played a lot of cricket in England, we played a lot of Test matches, we bowled with the duke ball. There is a lot of movement with the duke ball, you get a lot of confidence in outswing, inswing, whatever you're trying. So, that experience helped me out," Bumrah told reporters after the third day's play on Sunday.

India inched closer to a series sweep on day three by setting West Indies a massive target of 468 runs. In reply the hosts ended the day on 45 for 2. Asked about India's strategy, Bumrah said the plan was to create pressure in the first innings.

Ishant has played a lot more cricket than all of us, Shami has played a lot, I'm the new guy, so I try and ask questions. I ask them, they've played here before, so what works in different conditions? If the wicket is not doing anything what should we do? What different plans are to be there."

JASPRIT BUMRAH

"You have to assess the wicket, what are the conditions, what works here. Here the wicket has a lot more bounce. In such bouncy wickets you can become greedy and bowl short but you shouldn't do that. You should look to bowl in good areas and create pressure and try and bowl full. That was the plan going into the first innings," he said.

The 25-year-old pacer said he is always focussed on contributing to the team's cause.

"I always look at the team goals, if we win the match and I don't have any wickets it's fine.

My aim is to contribute to the team's success, be it by taking wickets or creating pressure," Bumrah said.

Bumrah said his aim always is to pick the brains of his experienced pace colleagues. "We have done a lot of hard work and last year we played a lot of away matches. Lot of camaraderie is there, we back each other. Even when things are going well we discuss what we can do better. We have a good relationship," he said.

"Ishant has played a lot more cricket than all of us, Shami has played a lot, I'm the new guy, so I try and ask questions. I ask them, they've played here before, so what works in different conditions? If the wicket is not doing anything what should we do? What different plans are to be there," the 25-year-old said.

After Bumrah removed one of the West Indies batsman in the first innings, skipper Virat Kohli was caught on the stump mic saying, "What a bowler, man! What a bowler!"

Asked about Kohli's reaction, Bumrah said the captain's faith instills self-belief in him. "The captain's confidence gives you a lot of self-belief. When you bowl, you can express

Denly set to open at Old Trafford, out-of-form Roy drops down order

AGENCIES
LONDON, SEPTEMBER 2

JOE DENLY will open the batting for England in the fourth Ashes Test with the struggling Jason Roy to drop down the order, the batsman told the BBC on Monday. England will hope that Denly can add some solidity with Rory Burns when the fourth Test gets underway at Old Trafford on Wednesday, as the latter's Surrey team-mate Roy has accumulated just 62 runs in the three Tests so far.

Roy, who has failed to adapt to the five-day format since the World Cup-winning campaign earlier in the season, will drop down to four. Denly scored his first-half century of the series in England's miraculous run chase in the third Test, inspired by Ben Stokes, which levelled the five-match series at 1-1.

"I got a call from (captain) Joe Root after a bit of time off and he said he'd like me to go at the top of the order and try to get us off to

a good start," Denly told BBC Radio. "Obviously Jason is going to bat four and that's great for English cricket," said the 33-year-old Denly.

"With Jason Roy in the team we are a better team and with him coming in at four, hopefully with the new ball worn off and myself and Rory Burns doing our job at the top, it allows him to come in and play his way. He's a great player to have there."

Langer felt 'sick' after loss

Australia's head coach Justin Langer on Monday said he felt "physically sick" in the aftermath of the defeat in the third Ashes Test at Headingley. The most frustrating bit for Australia was the unbeaten tenth-wicket partnership of 76 runs between Ben Stokes and Jack Leach. "That's the toughest part of it, we were that close. I actually felt physically sick after it, then I went back to my room and I wasn't sure whether to cry my eyes out or smash my hotel room."