

Aging Jayasuriya to play till next World Cup

Picking up the dashing opening batsman Sanath Jayasuriya for the forthcoming Asian Cup tournament in Pakistan, Sri Lanka's national selectors indicated that the aging left-hander could well play for the national team till the next World Cup, local media reports here Friday said.

Head of Sri Lanka's Cricket Selection Committee Ashantha de Mel said Thursday that they were 'forced to re-consider the selection policy after Jayasuriya hammered the second fastest century in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty-20 tournament'.

'In fact, Jayasuriya was able to force himself back into the national team by scoring a brilliant unbeaten century for the [Mumbai](#) Indians. Jayasuriya will definitely be playing in the next World Cup as long as the veteran left hander maintains his fitness and form in the important games,' state-run Daily News quoted Ashantha de Mel as saying.

The former Sri Lanka opening bowler, De Mel has said although the selection committee has not given up its long term policy of building up a young talented team, 'it will also keep a close eye more on the senior players who are reaching the twilight of their illustrious career'.

Although cricket pundits here are expressing their reservations for the 'surprise inclusion' of Jayasuriya for the Asia Cup tournament scheduled to commence June 23 in Pakistan, De Mel has said that it was 'a unanimous decision' by the selection committee.

'De Mel said that the IPL Twenty-20 tournament has proved that age is no barrier to steal the limelight and Jayasuriya has led from the front with some outstanding contributions with bat and ball,' the media report said.

However, De Mel hoped that players who are currently involved in the IPL Twenty20 tournament would continue their same form when representing their country in future international assignments.

The 38-year-old left-handed master-blaster, who retired last year from test cricket, has represented Sri Lanka in 110 tests and 411 one-day internationals and was dropped for the tour of West Indies due to poor form.

He became the third highest paid player of the Indian Premier League (IPL) when he was sold for a whopping US\$975,000 at a players' auction in India earlier this year.

P. Karunakaran (© IANS / India eNews)