

Hayden refuses to commit to Champions Trophy

Matthew Hayden joined his team mate Andrew Symonds and became the second Australian cricketer who refused to commit to play in the Champions Trophy if it is held in Pakistan later this year as scheduled.

The veteran opener, a father of three, declined to say if he would play in the tournament if the International Cricket Council (ICC) votes Thursday night not to move the tournament.

'If the information from security came back saying 'Yes, there are dangers as there are in any place you travel but I think it is fine to go', I would take that on board before I made my decision,' Hayden was quoted as saying by The Australian Monday.

Symonds was the first to raise concerns about the terrorist bombings in Pakistan and captain Ricky Ponting recently admitted that his players were worried about the idea of touring the strife-torn country. Australia had to even cancel its tour to the troubled country earlier in the year.

New Zealand's Brendon McCullum and Jacob Oram have also made it clear they are not in favour of touring Pakistan. The Kiwis are scheduled to play a three-match one-day series next month in Pakistan.

Pressure from broadcaster ESPN Star, which has a billion-dollar deal with the ICC, may convince the ICC to move the tournament for fear that stars and even teams may pull out, making it a second-rate competition.

England, South Africa and Sri Lanka are the alternate venues if the tournament is shifted out of Pakistan.

The Federation of International Cricketers Associations (FICA) and player associations from Australia, England, New Zealand and South Africa warned the ICC at a security meeting in Dubai Sunday that there were serious concerns among players.

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