

B/N Walsh, Courtney

Walsh in charge

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Jamaican pacer will lead West Indies against Sri Lanka

FROM H G HELPS
Associate Editor
In Bridgetown, Barbados

CCOURTNEY Walsh will lead the West Indies in the one day and Test cricket series against Sri Lanka, the *Observer* can report.

Walsh, 34, will be recommended by the selection committee of the West Indies Cricket Board when the Board holds its general meeting in Guyana at the weekend.

The Board will have no problem accepting the recommendation, a reliable source told the *Observer*.

"The selectors have seen no reason to take the job away from Walsh, because, despite the pressures he is facing, he really has not failed and he has said that he wants to continue playing," said the source.

Sri Lanka will arrive in the Caribbean on Sunday, June 1 to engage the West Indies in a single one day international and two-Test series.

The one day international will be

played in Trinidad and Tobago on June 6, followed by the first Test at the Antigua Recreation Ground from Friday, June 13 to Tuesday, June 17.

The second Test, a historic occasion for the people of St Vincent and the Grenadines, will be played at Arnos Vale ground in St Vincent's capital, Kingstown, from June 20 to 24.

Walsh led the West Indies in the recent home series against India, but calls have got louder for him to give the job up and hand over the leadership to the team's vice-captain, Brian Lara.

Pressure has increased on the former Excelsior High school student, moreso after Lara led the team to victory in the third Test against India at the Kensington Oval here, due to the illness of Walsh.

Former stars of the cricket pitch have joined in a chorus in calling on Walsh to step aside, calls they describe as being in the interest of youth and the future of West Indies cricket.

Among them are the world's greatest allrounder, Barbadian Sir Garfield

Sobers, Trinidadians Larry Gomes, and Michael 'Joey' Carew, who is also a member of the selection committee and the man primarily responsible for Lara's upbringing.

Guyanese Colin Croft, who slapped West Indian fans in the face when he toured South Africa with a 'Rebel' team in 1981, has also called on Walsh to hang up his 'whites'.

But Walsh, whom it is said would have given up the job at the end of the regional Red Stripe Cup championship, is still bowling well and indications are that he will keep doing what he loves best for a long time.

In one of the finer performances in the regional game this season, Walsh took nine wickets in the 10th round Red Stripe Cup match against champions Barbados at the Kensington Oval, including a splendid six for 39 off 19 overs in the second innings.

"Walsh is a very strong player. He is not like the average cricketer who gets old for cricket with age. He may be around for a long time yet," said a former West Indies cricketer here.



WALSH...not bowing to pressure

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