

Relieved Roy's back on target for World Cup

By RICHARD SPILLER

JASON Roy has taken a major step towards securing a part in England's bid to retain the World Cup.

The 32-year-old Surrey opener cracked 132 against Bangladesh at Mirpur, his second century in five one-day internationals piloting the visitors to victory by 132 runs and sewing up a series win.

Roy was a key player when Eoin Morgan's men thrillingly won the World Cup at Lord's in 2019 but his form over the past year has varied between scratchy and dire, losing his place in England's T20 side to Alex Hales.

Yet the selectors kept faith with Roy and he is repaying them, hammering 113 against South Africa in Bloemfontein in January. Three low scores followed but Roy's 132 out of 326-7 at Mirpur was especially valuable for his prospects of another World Cup.

England have just seven ODIs during the domestic season, against New Zealand and Ireland, and then head to India for the global highlight. When they get there, the side now captained by Jos Butler will expect slow surfaces similar to Mirpur.

Hitting boundaries has been Roy's trademark in an international career which has seen him play 115 ODIs and 64 T20 internationals – plus five Tests – but he had to fight hard for fluency during his 12th ODI century against a spin-dominated attack.

He admitted: "Every run, every boundary I scored was a bit of scrap." Roy worked his way to fluency in an innings that featured 18 fours and a six.

With Hales, now forgiven past misdemeanours, plus youngsters Phil Salt and Will Jacks all vying for a spot at the top of the order, it's no wonder Roy has been



Jason Roy and Will Jacks batting together Picture: Mark Sandom

feeling under pressure and he admitted his century has "helped my case".

County colleague Sam Curran was the other standout performer for England for a heavy victory in the second match of the short series, which they entered

1-0. He struck a lively 33 in the closing stages of the innings and then struck twice within the opening over of the reply on the way to claiming 4-29 from 6.4 overs as the hosts were dismissed for 194. Jacks, having been despatched from

England's Test tour of New Zealand, recovered from jetlag – and his luggage arriving 48 hours late – in making 26 and taking 1-18 as England won the first match of the Bangladesh series by three wickets.

Hercules hit the road

By George Mallett



In a generally quieter weekend, Hercules Wimbledon Athletic Club athletes competed at a number of road races across the country. In North Devon, Alex Milne competed in the

Bideford Half Marathon, finishing fifth in 68:51. The annual event starts in the town and sees the athletes follow the River Torridge into the heart of Devon, before returning in a 10km sprint towards the coast.

Milne, a GB international as an ultramarathon runner, boasts a 2:17:40 marathon best and joked that the race saw him reach "marathon pace at half-marathon effort", an indication that his fitness is not quite at his best.

The race was won by fellow GB international Ronnie Richmond, who broke the course record to finish in 65:36.

Milne will be forgiven for enjoying some downtime after a stellar 2022 in which he twice ran under 2:18 for the marathon, first by finishing 12th in the Manchester Marathon in April and then 64th in the Valencia marathon in December.

In between the two, Milne also represented Great Britain over 50km, finishing sixth in 2:54.33 to earn team gold at the European Championships in Spain.

Across the country Milne's team-mates were seen competing at the Cambridge Half marathon, again held on Sunday. First home for Hercules was James Stockings, who finished in 1:08.30 for 18th place.

It marks the end of a sequence of four races in four weekends for Stockings, beginning with a Surrey League top-20 in mid-February and also seeing him finish inside the top-100 in the English National Cross-Country Championships in Chester last weekend.

His performance at Cambridge represents a personal best by almost 30 seconds, a time that ranked him just outside the UK's top 200 in 2022.

Also competing in Cambridge was Austin Hall, who finished in 1:26:30, running a new personal best of 78:56.

Holding on to history

By Dominic Bliss

As Liverpool were putting seven goals past Manchester United in the Premier League last Sunday, loyal supporters of Corinthian-Casuals were watching intently to see if their club could cling on to a significant slice of history.

The Tolworth-based Isthmian League club were formed by a merger between Corinthian FC and Casuals FC in 1939, and it was the former of those two footballing institutions that handed Manchester United the heaviest defeat in their history, running out 11-3 winners in a game played in Leyton in 1904.

Liverpool's 7-0 victory last weekend fell one goal short of Corinthians' record, which the club recognises today in a wall display at their United Business Group Stadium in King George's Field, Tolworth.

In 2004, Manchester United sent a team down to play Corinthian-Casuals to mark the centenary of their record defeat, and on that occasion the Premier League club ran out 3-1 winners. Tolworthians will tell you it is therefore 12-6 on aggregate in the Corinthians' favour over the two matches. Meanwhile, back in 2023, it was a frustrating weekend on the pitch for Corinthian-Casuals, who lost 2-0 away at Margate and now find themselves second from bottom and 13 points from safety. Casuals are at home to Carshalton Athletic in a local derby on Saturday at 3pm as they look to turn their fortunes around and fight for their Isthmian League Premier Division status.

Contrasting fortunes for Chelsea teams

By TIM HARRISON

CHELSEA Women have to regroup and refocus this weekend after being outgunned by Arsenal in the League Cup final.

The uncomfortable 3-1 defeat at Selhurst Park saw the Gunners do to Chelsea what the Blues usually do to other teams – outpass, outplay and outpossess, writes Tim Harrison.

Manchester United visit Kingmeadow this weekend, with an extra spring in their step after

seeing how overwhelmingly Arsenal defeated their London rivals.

Manager Emma Hayes, who dramatically changed formation in mid-match to try to address her team's shortcomings, was philosophical.

"Everything has to be top class, and today it was not at Chelsea's

standard," she said at the end. "Sometimes you have to lose games like this to be reminded."

But in a reversal of fortunes, Chelsea's men rediscovered their winning ways in a tense battle with Leeds at Stamford Bridge, setting themselves up nicely for a trip to Leicester this weekend.

Wes Fofana scored his first goal for the Blues – a sweetly angled header that crept in under the crossbar – and the home team

held on to earn Graham Potter some respite from the pressure he has been under for weeks.

Yankee owner Todd Boehly, wearing a Chelsea scarf and hat to try to gee up his new team, looked suitably delighted at the final whistle, although the last few minutes of the Leeds game were almost unbearably nervous.

Watching the Blues is not good for the old ticker.

The Blizzards engulf the Hurricanes

By Patrick Hutchison



Players of the match Boyan Terzov, left, and Aarush Bhomia, right

IT is now the business end of the season with four teams out of six vying for top spot. Beddington Park Blizzards kept their hopes alive by defeating Hackbridge Hurricanes 5-0.

The Blizzards started in the ascendancy and led at the break through George Duke, who made no mistake with his finish.

In the second half, a corner for Blizzards

once again found the towering Boyan Terzov, who directed his header goalwards. An impressive initial save saw the rebound tapped in by Ethan Davis to make it 2-0.

Hurricanes' relentlessly positive attitude towards playing the beautiful game as it should be was once again evident, but with the likes of Leo, Oliver

and Nikit at the back they are also able to do the dirty work effectively.

Having said that, there was not much that could be done to stop Ethan's point-blank effort almost taking the net off for his second of the match to make it 3-0.

Corners were causing confusion for the Hurricanes, with a rebound off Leo Djhait finding its way into the net to make it 4-0.

Finn Wyner, with a

bursting run from the centre of the park, looked like he was going to score but for a fine sliding block by Joe Keahey.

The Blizzards scored once more from a corner – this time rifled in by the ever-impressive Boyan.

Great performance by the Blizzards, led by captain George Duke. Undoubted effort from both teams. Perhaps the scoreline flattered the home team slightly.