

Fits like

FROM PAGE 13 of more than 50.

He has been happy to tell anyone who listens on tour that Gilchrist has shot to the top of his most-admired player list.

Maheer has little experience as a keeper, having filled the role in a VB Series match against Sri Lanka at the Gabba last month, in a World Cup warm-up match in Pretoria and once for Queensland. But the funny-man of the Australian side has impressed all with his sound glove work.

Gilchrist has encouraged Maheer to work hard on the craft, but in Maheer's own words: "There's a big difference between being a bits-and-pieces keeper and a specialist number two."

Buchanan denied the Australians were not showing the Netherlands enough respect by fielding a weakened team.

"With regard to Holland, we're certainly not downplaying them as a cricketing nation, but the reality is they are not strong," he said.

"Therefore what we need to do is to go into that particular game, get out of it certain things, setting ourselves certain challenges, but also using that as our preliminary to Zimbabwe."

Buchanan said he wanted all 14 players to have had a game before Monday night's match with Pool A leader Zimbabwe at Bulawayo.

"From my point of view I would like to go to Zimbabwe knowing we have got 14 players who all have a bit of cricket under their belt," he said.

Point to prove

FROM PAGE 13 in the longer form of the game as his reputation as a slogger means that he has only ever made one Test appearance against New Zealand in Hamilton in 1999, where he made 0 and 30.

"I am not really worried that I am basically playing one-day cricket now," said Powell who has hit 61 sixes in 57 one-dayers.

"I guess I have performed a bit better at the one-day level so far and that's probably the reason why the selectors feel inclined to use me in those games."

West Indies skipper Carl Hooper had high praise for Powell's blazing half-century.

"Ricardo Powell is probably one of the better strikers of the ball in modern day cricket," said the captain.

"It is very handy that some one like that is coming in at number seven for us. To get 50 off 31 balls shows what he is capable of and I think that as the tournament goes on you will see a lot more of him."

Quips & Quotes

FROM PAGE 13 and cheering it to do better."

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee appealing for calm as police were called in to guard the homes of the national cricket team which has badly under-performed at the World Cup.

"Ricardo Powell is probably one of the better strikers of the ball in modern day cricket. When he gets going, he can be awesome."

West Indies captain Carl Hooper praising the middle-order batsman's 50 off 31 balls against Bangladesh, the fastest half century of the tournament so far.

"Some players should stop comparing the captaincy styles of Shaun Pollock and the late Hansie Cronje and get on with the job of winning World Cup matches."

Gerald Majola, chief executive of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA), trying to heal divisions in the hosts' team.

Anxious Kiwis

FROM PAGE 13 operations in the past but this is the first time we have been involved in a large scale international security project involving skilled personnel, equipment and planning of this nature."

New Zealand said they have security concerns over playing in Kenya since a November bombing killed 16 people in Mombasa.

If the International Cricket Council (ICC) turns down New Zealand's request for a new venue, Stephen Fleming's men will be docked four points which could cost them a berth in the Super Six stage.

Sri Lanka have always insisted they will go ahead with the February 24 game in Nairobi.



Cricket World Cup 2003
Australia vs Netherlands
Venue: Potchefstroom
GraameenPhone Premier Cricket League
Biman v Young Pegasus
Venue: FCS
Abahani v Kalabagan KC
Venue: BKSP.

Victoria keep winning



SPORTS REPORTER

Victoria Sporting Club recorded their sixth straight win in the GraameenPhone Premier Division Cricket League with a six-wicket sailing over Uttara Sporting Club at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Chasing a paltry total of 157 in 50 overs, the defending champions raced home making 159 with 14 overs to spare.

Opener Wasim Nayeem hammered highest 41 off just 29 balls with a sixer and seven boundaries while the other opener Parvez Ahmed chipped in with a patient 31 off 75 deliveries.

Middle-order Azam Iqbal (30) was the other notable run-getter for the winners.

Earlier, put in to bat, Uttara were restricted to 157 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs in the face of some brilliant bowling by former national pacer Saiful Islam and left-arm spinner Manzarul Islam.

Both Saiful and Manzarul took three wickets each conceding 31 and 19 runs respectively.

Uttara's number eight batsman Aslam Khan saved his side from getting all out below one hundred with a workman-like half-century (50 not out off 68 balls) that included one six and three fours.

With this win, Victoria further consolidated their position at the top of the table having raised their tally

to 32 points. On the other hand, Uttara suffered their third defeat against three wins and remained glued to 18 points.

INDIRA ROAD KC V ORIENT SC

Away at the BKSP ground in Savar, Indira Road earned six valuable points against Orient Sporting Club for superior run-rate after their match ended in a tie.

Batting first, Indira Road scored 153 for nine in 50 overs while Orient were all out for 153 in the last ball of their innings.

But Indira Road were awarded with full six points because of their better run-rate in the 40-over calculation.

Indira Road had made 126 for six after 40 overs of their innings while Orient were 121 for seven at the end of the 40th over.

SCOREBOARDS

Scoreboards of the two GraameenPhone Premier Cricket League matches yesterday:

Victoria SC v Uttara SC
Venue: BNS

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Debabrata	9	1	46	0
Rabbani	8	1	34	2
Sumon	7	1	23	1
Shaiful	2	0	7	0
Faisal	5	0	21	1
Monirul	2	0	11	0
Aslam	3	0	11	0

Result: Victoria SC won by six wickets.

Indira Road KC v Orient SC
Venue: BKSP

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Humayun b Sajib	32			
Papon c Sumon b Lucky	17			
Kalim lbw b Kamal	0			
Hadi run out	9			
Kiran c Kamal b Jewel	24			
Mowla run out	7			
Arafat c Masum b Sajib	14			

Total: (For 9 wkts in 50 overs) 157
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-28, 3-38, 4-52, 5-58, 6-79, 7-105, 8-115, 9-148.

Bowler O M R W
Saiful 7 1 31 3
Nuruzzaman 10 3 14 0
Parvez 8 2 21 2
Razzak 5 0 27 0
Sabbir 9 0 25 0
Masudur 2 1 5 1
Manzarul 8 0 19 3
Wasim 1 0 9 0

VICTORIA SC
Wasim c Rana b Rabbani 41
Parvez c Moniruzzaman b Sumon 31
Nuruzzaman c Sumon b Rabbani 0
Azam lbw b Faisal 30
Anisur not out 29
Salim not out 4
Extras: (b-3, lb-3, nb-3, w-15) 24
Total: (For 4 wkts in 36 overs) 159

Fall of wickets: 1-55, 2-55, 3-104, 4-142.

Bowler O M R W
Debabrata 9 1 46 0
Rabbani 8 1 34 2
Sumon 7 1 23 1
Shaiful 2 0 7 0
Faisal 5 0 21 1
Monirul 2 0 11 0
Aslam 3 0 11 0

Result: Victoria SC won by six wickets.

Bowler O M R W
Sanjay 10 1 33 2
Rintu 2 1 12 0
Arafat 10 0 32 2
Raihan 10 2 27 2
Imran 10 2 26 0
Humayun 8 3 17 3

Result: Match tied.

Big time chokers?



AFP, Johannesburg

India and South Africa, two of the teams capable of stopping the Australian World Cup juggernaut, finally cracked under the immense pressure of hope and expectation on Tuesday.

Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar was forced to issue a public statement appealing for the violence at home, which has greeted the team's woeful start to the tournament, to stop.

Meanwhile, deep divisions opened up in the South African squad as veteran batsman Gary Kirsten ordered his teammates to get behind under-fire skipper Shaun Pollock and stop comparing him to the late, disgraced captain Hansie Cronje.

Tendulkar broke off from his team's preparations for Wednesday's game against

Zimbabwe in Harare to appeal to fans to have patience.

"We are very disappointed with the kind of performances we have put up and I also understand the disappointment you have gone through."

"I am here to assure all of you that we will be fighting in all the games until the last ball is bowled, so please continue to support us, as you have done in the past, which will surely help us."

Tendulkar's extraordinary gesture came a day after an effigy of Indian captain Saurav Ganguly was burnt in Calcutta while black paint and oil was thrown at Mohammad Kaif's house in Allahabad.

India, who have four points from two games, must win their remaining key games against Zimbabwe, England and Pakistan to qualify for the Super Six round.

Fans in India vented their anger after one of the best batting line-ups in the world failed to last 50 overs against minnows Netherlands and were shot out for 125 by Australia.

Police in India have provided

security to relatives of Ganguly, vice captain Rahul Dravid and bowlers Anil Kumble and Javagal Srinath following the incident at Kaif's home.

Hosts South Africa would sympathise with India's plight.

Kirsten told his teammates to lay off Pollock, warning them they should question their own part in the team's present crisis where two defeats in three games have placed their campaign in jeopardy.

"I feel Shaun has done a very good job," said Kirsten, who once served as Cronje's deputy.

"Instead of blaming Shaun, individuals should look at themselves as to why things have gone wrong."

On Monday, Kirsten's opening partner Herschelle Gibbs sang the praises of Cronje who was killed in a plane crash in June.

"The passion with which Cronje played meant he was always keen and always believed we could win from any situation," Gibbs told AFP.

Get tough on him

REUTERS, Melbourne

The world's top anti-doping official warned Australia not to "go soft" on Shane Warne if the cricketer were found guilty of taking a banned drug.

World Anti-Doping Agency chairman Dick Pound said Australia needed to be seen to be tough on drugs after last year giving Australian Commonwealth Games shooter Phillip Adams a warning for using a banned diuretic, The Age newspaper reported on Wednesday.

"I think Australia in general has to be very careful in a case like Warne's," Canada's Pound was quoted as saying.

"There has been a long history of Australia accusing everyone, but your country doesn't have the same enthusiasm when your folks are involved," Pound said.

"Australia has to avoid that perception of going soft on its athletes while it attacks others like the Chinese."

Mohsin caught unawares

FROM PAGE 13 Canada and the West Indies which has raised the debate that Mohsin is a better bowling coach but his lack of batting aptitude is telling on the Bangladesh team.

There's talk in the air that the Pakistani's tenure could well be over after the World Cup but the 39-year-old was not entertaining that idea just yet.

"I think I need another two years to get the team into a reasonable shape," said Mohsin apparently unaware of the ground reality.

The lack of communication between the team management and the coach was also highlighted by the Akram issue.

Sources close to the team say that it was captain Khaled Mashud who convinced the BCB that veteran Akram was the ideal substitute for Mashrafe. It appears that Mashud didn't deem it necessary to consult Mohsin about Akram before asking the BCB.

Mashud is a staunch supporter of youth in the side and it required a surprising change of heart on his part to pull for Akram who was omitted from the original World Cup squad in favour of the youngsters.

And Mashud insisted that Akram's experience had nothing to do with his inclusion.

"We didn't select him for his (Akram's) experience. Rather, his form in domestic cricket was our main consideration."

"When we set off for the tournament we had planned for eleven games (five in Namibia and six in the World Cup). But now there are only three matches left and with another paceman available in the squad there's no point in bringing another one. Besides, our batting is still not clicking. That is one of the main reasons why we asked for Akram", explained Mashud.

Akram is expected to arrive in South Africa on Thursday to join the team in Bloemfontein.

Dutch spirit of 1964

FROM PAGE 13 Rudi Onstein, the man who hit the winning runs that day, is now The Netherlands' World Cup media liaison officer and is also reporting on the tournament for the country's De Telegraaf newspaper.

For Onstein, the memories of that match, against a strong Australian side that had just retained the Ashes in England, are still vivid although he was at pains to play down the win and his own part in it.

"I think Australia had had a good night out in the Hague, the night before," joked Onstein an all-rounder who usually opened the bowling, but not in this match.

"And because the game was played on a matting pitch they were not allowed to wear spikes so they had to borrow plimsolls from us."

"They batted first and made about 190 and we got them in the last over. I hit two sixes off Bob Cowper and when they only needed one to win Graham McKenzie bowled me a nice one to hit that went for four," Onstein, who played for The Netherlands from 1959-1977 explained.

But, as well as the result, the match was also famous for the fact that Australia's Jack Potter got hit on the head while batting.

"This was way before the days of helmets and Norman O'Neill told me

that, with Australia next due to tour the West Indies, Potter was thinking about wearing a crash helmet against their fast bowlers.

"But it never came to that and helmets didn't come into cricket until much later."

Asked about how the Netherlands side of today compares with the 1964 vintage Onstein, a bank manager by profession, replied: "It's impossible to compare teams. But Australia were the best side in the world then and they are the best side in the world right now."

Pollock pleased

FROM PAGE 13 depend on other results," Pollock added.

Four teams are tightly bunched at the top of Pool B. Sri Lanka lead with two wins out of two and eight points.

New Zealand also have eight points but from three games and have also refused to play against Kenya in Nairobi. West Indies have six points and South Africa four, both from three games.

The top three qualify for the Super Six stage, with run rate set to be a deciding factor. South Africa have a superior run rate to both New Zealand and West Indies.

Forget Cronje

FROM PAGE 13 him the icon that he was," said Gibbs, who was suspended for six months in the match-fixing scandal.

"The passion with which Cronje played meant he was always keen and always believed we could win from any situation."

"Shaun is quite new to being a captain and he's obviously still got a lot to learn."

"But he was the guy who was vice-captain and the first guy that was obviously in charge after the stuff (match-fixing scandal) broke out."

Kirsten, who once served as Cronje's deputy, immediately jumped to Pollock's defence.

"Personally I feel Shaun has done a very good job," Kirsten said.

"He came into the job in very trying circumstances and when he was in charge we played our best cricket, matching Australia both here and

there. I certainly don't think Shaun is to be blamed for where we are."

Instead of blaming Shaun individuals should look at themselves as to why things have gone wrong," Kirsten said.

Kirsten was unable to explain why certain players still hankered after Cronje and made public statements regarding their feelings but suggested that those making the statements should be questioned.

South African cricketers Jonty Rhodes and Allan Donald had last month dedicated the 2003 World Cup to Cronje, calling him an "extra special person."

But World Cup organisers, led by former South African cricket chief Ali Bacher, said the players did not have the right to dedicate the tournament to one person.

Aussies at ease

FROM PAGE 13 But negative thinking does not a world-beating team make.

Buchanan can even see some positives emerging from a match against The Netherlands, who qualified for their second World Cup by winning the International Cricket Council (ICC) Trophy, a tournament contested by cricket's leading lesser nations, in Toronto in 2001.

"Hopefully, Holland will play out of their skins and really test us in batting, bowling and fielding," Buchanan said.

The Netherlands, well-led by former Somerset fast bowler Roland Lefebvre, have performed well in the field during their opening two defeats by India and England.

But despite the international experience they gained against the big boys during September's Champions Trophy event in Sri Lanka, their batting has continued to let them down.

Totals of 136 and 142, against India and England respectively, are not enough at this level.

But just being here, after a previous World Cup appearance in 1996 where they failed to win a game, is enough for Lefebvre's enthusiastic amateurs.

"We will enjoy every game what-

ever the outcome," he said.

However, at least against England, The Netherlands' innings lasted the distance, much to Lefebvre's delight.

"We managed to bat out 50 overs and with the amount of proper one-day internationals we play that is quite something."

If they do the same against Australia it will be quite miraculous.

LINE-UPS

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Michael Bevan, Andy Bichel, Jason Gillespie, Ian Harvey, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hogg, Brett Lee, Darren Lehmann, Jimmy Maher, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Andy Symonds.

NETHERLANDS (from): Roland Lefebvre (captain), Luuk van Troost, Daan van Bunge, Jacob Esmeijer, Victor Grandia, Feiko Kloppenburg, Tim de Leede, Henk Mol, Klaus van Noortwijk, Adeel Raja, Edgar Schiferli, Reinhout Scholte, Jeroen Smits, Nick Statham, Bas Zuidender.

Umpires: David Orchard (Rsa) and Peter Willey (Eng)

TV umpire: Aleem Dar (Pak)

Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (Sri)



A policeman stands guard outside the residence of India captain Saurav Ganguly in Kolkata yesterday. Security has been posted around India cricketers' residences after angry demonstrations by fans following their dismal performances in the World Cup.

Spinning for spinners



AFP, Johannesburg

Pakistan's wily off-spinner Saqlain Mushtaq on Wednesday warned World Cup rivals that slow bowlers should not be taken lightly since they turn around games with their bag of tricks.

"I am very surprised when I hear that spinners have no role to play in one-day cricket because they can do a lot of damage," said Saqlain, regarded as one of the best spinners in the modern game.

With champion Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne out of the tournament after a failed drug test, it is left to Saqlain, Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan and India's Anil Kumble and Harbhajan Singh to make an impact in the World Cup.

"It's a huge challenge for spinners to stop the flow of runs besides taking wickets," said the Pakistani who recorded one of his two hat tricks against Zimbabwe in the

previous World Cup four years ago.

Named Wisden's cricketer-of-the-year in 2000, Saqlain and Muralitharan have taken off-spin bowling to new heights, although the Pakistani has been out of the limelight in recent times.

"I am not bothered what critics say about my being not in the spinners' race, my task is to take wickets and I am up to it," he said.

Saqlain was not asked to play in the first match against Australia, and bowled just four deliveries in the second match against Namibia.

The 26-year-old from Lahore has 285 one-day wickets against Muralitharan's tally of 309, but has a better strike rate of 30.2 as compared to the Sri Lankan's 35.9.

"Murali and Warne are world class spinners but God has given me a place in history and I am quite happy about that," Saqlain said.

The master crafter earned a huge reputation playing English county cricket with Surrey whom he helped to win the title in 1999, the county's first for 28 years.

His mystery ball one that turns

from leg to off with no change in action also brought him unprecedented fame during the Pakistan tour of Australia in 1996-97.

"Saqlain's extraordinary performances with Surrey and lack of showing for Pakistan indicates he is not settled in the Pakistan team," observed former Test spinner Intikhab Alam, who also played for Surrey in the 1970s.

Saqlain has reached the landmarks of 100, 150 and 200 wickets faster than any other bowler in the world. He also has the distinction of claiming the highest number of one-day wickets in a calendar year 69 in 31 matches in 1997.

His in-depth knowledge of English cricket could prove to be vital as Pakistan's next World Cup encounter is against England at Newlands in Cape Town on Saturday.

SAQLAIN'S ODIS
Matches: 166, **Overs:** 8614, **Maidens:** 64, **Runs:** 6147, **Wickets:** 285, **Average:** 21.56 **Best:** 5-20.

Pitches will have a say



AFP, Potchefstroom