



INSPIRATION GUARANTEED: England fans celebrate a four during the England-Namibia World Cup Pool A match at Port Elizabeth yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

England tested

INTERNET, Port Elizabeth

England finally beat minnows Namibia but it was a hard-earned victory in Port Elizabeth.

England thought the 272 they had scored after being put into bat on a slow pitch would be enough to beat the amateurs and claim a valuable four points.

But at one stage it looked as though a huge upset was on the cards when 21-year-old student Jan-Berry Burger was smashing the England bowlers around the ground.

He was eventually out for 85, off just 86 balls, which was the first time a Namibian had scored a fifty in a one-day international.

However, the remaining batsmen could not hit the runs required and the game petered out.

Questions will be asked of England's inability to bowl out so-called lesser opposition.

They failed to dismiss Holland on Sunday and could not get rid of Namibia on Wednesday.

England toiled with the ball on occasions and will have to improve if they are to beat Pakistan in the next game.

England suffered a setback even before the match had started when captain Nasser Hussain was ruled out with a stiff neck.

Up stepped Alec Stewart, who had relinquished the England captaincy four years ago after a poor World Cup, to take the reins once more.

And he played well for his 60, his 28th one-day international fifty, but

was furious when he failed to get behind a shot and was caught on the boundary.

Nick Knight (8) was the first man out when his attempted pull shot was caught by Louis Burger off Rudie van Vuuren.

Then Michael Vaughan (14) followed him back to the pavilion with a copy-cat shot.

Trescothick, with a new batting stance, hit 58 off 66 balls and with Stewart steadied the ship.

Paul Collingwood and Andrew Flintoff also got themselves in before playing horrendous shots.

Craig White was incredibly lucky to stay at the crease when he survived a run-out and finally went for 35.

Ian Blackwell thought he was out too when a spliced shot was caught. But the umpire signalled a no-ball because the required number of fielders was not in the circle.

He was definitely out an over later when he was caught behind. And he was unable to bowl after tweaking his back while fielding.

White, Ronnie Irani and Andrew Caddick were all out in the final over as Van Vuuren took five wickets in the match, the first Namibian ever to do so.

Van Vuuren enjoyed a cameo appearance with the bat too, smashing Jimmy Anderson for six with the final ball.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the World Cup Group A match between England and Namibia at St. George's Park here on Wednesday:

ENGLAND

Trescothick c Louis Burger b Jan Burger 58
 Knight c Louis Burger b Vuuren 6
 Vaughan c Louis Burger b Vuuren 14
 Stewart c Bjorn Kotze b Deon Kotze 60
 Collingwood c Keulder b Snyman 38
 Flintoff c Keulder b Snyman 21
 Blackwell c Schoor b Snyman 16
 White c Sarel Burger b Vuuren 35
 Irani c Deon Kotze b Vuuren 12

Caddick b Vuuren	4	J Burger	2	0	23	1
Anderson not out	0	S Burger	6	0	32	0
Extras: (lb 1, w4, nb3)	8	NAMIBIA				
Total: (All out in 50 overs)	272	S Swanepoel c Vaughan b Anderson	8			
Fall of wickets: 1-26, 2-43, 3-121, 4-159, 5-202, 6-205, 7-242, 8-264, 9-268.		J Burger c Collingwood b White	85			
Bowler	O	M	R	W		
Snyman	10	0	69	3		
Vuuren	10	2	43	5		
L Burger	9	0	45	0		
B Kotze	3	0	24	0		
D Kotze	10	0	35	1		

L Burger c and b Flintoff	5
D Keulder run out	46
B Murgatroyd b Irani	24
G Snyman b White	0
D Kotze b Flintoff	7

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England's Marcus Trescothick hooks during his team's match against Namibia at Port Elizabeth yesterday.

PHOTO: INTERNET

Warne hearing Friday

AFP, Sydney

The hearing into Shane Warne's positive drug test would be held on Friday, the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) said on Wednesday.

The ACB quickly moved on the inquiry formalities after it received the result of Warne's B sample test confirming the positive return on Wednesday.

The high-profile leg-spin bowler faces being forced out of the game with a two-year ban if he is found guilty of using a banned diuretic, a stimulant which can also conceal the use of steroids.

Australian Sports and Drug Agency (ASDA) spokesman Shawn Winnett said on Wednesday Warne had waived his right to lodge a technical complaint against its testing system, and the test result had been passed on to the ACB.

Warne was informed of his B sample result several days ago after initially testing positive to the banned diuretics hydrochlorothiazide and amiloride here on January 22.

"The process is now wrapped up from our end and it's now with the sport," Winnett said.

"It's up to the ACB now to convene its hearing. The athlete has seven days to make a submission if he has any concerns about the testing process.

"They can waive the right and it then moves on to the next step, which it has in this case."

The ACB has appointed a three-person panel to hear the case

Queensland judge Glen Williams, former Test spinner Peter Taylor and medical specialist Susan White.

Warne, 33, returned home from the World Cup in southern Africa last week after learning of his positive test.

Australian media have reported that Warne took the diuretic pill after being badgered by his mother, who wanted her son to look good at a news conference prior to the team's departure for the World Cup.

In another development, ASDA chief executive John Mendoza dismissed a report that Warne's drug test indicated he had taken more than one banned tablet as "a nonsense".

Mendoza, whose organisation conducted Warne's drug test, said the test couldn't determine if multiple tablets were present in the player's system.

"The assertion in the media today that there were multiple tablets because the levels were so high, is a nonsense," Mendoza told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"From an analytical point of view we wouldn't be able to determine whether he'd taken one, two or 22 tablets from that particular sample."

The Sydney Morning Herald said a source close to the investigation into the controversy found Warne's drug test showed a result that reflected the use of more than one diuretic tablet.

"Warne must have taken more than one tablet to get the effect he

has registered," the newspaper quoted the source as saying.

The Herald also quoted the Canadian chairman of the World Anti-Doping Agency, Dick Pound, as ridiculing Warne's explanation that the tablet was given to him by his mother, Brigitte.

"Poisoned by his mother?" Pound told the paper. "It is good, very good. It ranks up there with the one I got it from the toilet seat."

Reports earlier this week suggested that a second sample taken from Warne had also tested positive for banned substances, dashing the master leg-spinner's slim hopes of having drugs charges against him dropped.

Melbourne's Herald Sun reported that the Australian Sports Drugs Agency (ASDA) advised Warne on Monday that his B urine sample had provided the same positive result as the A sample that led to Warne's shock exit from the World Cup last week.

Warne has made no official statement on the latest reports as his legal team and public relations advisers try to save his career.

At 33, Warne's international career would very likely be finished if he receives the minimum two-year ban for testing positive for a banned diuretic, a stimulant which can conceal the use of steroids.

Oh! brother

AFP, New Delhi

India's beleaguered World Cup captain Saurav Ganguly has received a resounding vote of no-confidence from his big brother.

Snehasish Ganguly believes the Indian skipper has lost his scoring touch and will be stripped of the captaincy unless there is a turnaround in his team's fortunes in South Africa.

The Indian opener is the ninth-highest run-getter in the world with 8,272 in 220 one-dayers with 19 centuries.

But he has scored just 75 in his last nine matches, with his latest flop coming against Australia on Saturday when he scored only nine runs.

According to Snehasish Ganguly, Saurav's dismissal against the Australians edging a delivery that was sailing well wide typified his younger brother's problems.

"Can any sane person nick such a wide ball?" he said in The Indian Express.

"If he (Saurav) carries on the same way, not only will he lose his captaincy, but he will also be dropped from the first XI," Snehasish said.

India were shot out for 125 in an awful batting display against Australia before losing the game by nine wickets.

Snehasish said he did not believe Australian pace was the main reason for India's defeat.

"Many people may praise the Australian team, but I don't agree with them," said Snehasish, himself a former first-class cricketer.

"Even a para (local) cricketer from Biren Roy Road, where we stay (in Calcutta), can easily knock out Sachin (Tendulkar) or Saurav's wicket," he said.

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Colin Miller

PHOTO: STAR FILE

Funky Dutch

INTERNET, undated

As if their fluoro orange uniforms weren't dancefloor-chic enough, the Dutch team could get a whole lot funkier after the World Cup.

Colin "Funky" Miller, who represented the Netherlands and Australia during his career, said he would pursue a coaching position with the Dutch XI, if such a vacancy were to materialise.

Speaking ahead of Thursday's clash between Australia and the Dutch, Miller believes his cricketing knowledge could shape the team into an internationally competitive unit.

"At that level you could really influence their style of play and try to establish them as a Test-playing

nation," Miller said.

"I could pass on the techniques I learned with the Australian team. It's something I have a real interest in after the World Cup," Miller, who played two seasons in the Netherlands and is married to a Dutchwoman, maintains close friendships with members of the Dutch and Australian squads, and still travels to the Netherlands at least once a year.

Miller is concerned about the fate of Dutch cricket after the tournament, with several veteran players including captain Roland Lefebvre set to retire.

"It would be a good challenge,"

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Fans behind Flower



PHOTO: INTERNET

REBEL WITH A CAUSE: Zimbabwe's Andy Flower sports a black wristband in protest against the present Zimbabwean government during yesterday's World Cup Pool A match against India at Harare.

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwe's star batsman Andy Flower defied cricket authorities on Wednesday by protesting once more against President Robert Mugabe's government during the

World Cup match against India here.

Flower, who wore a black armband in the first match against Namibia last week and issued a strong statement condemning human rights abuses in his country,

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An experience to treasure

AFP, Potchefstroom

It was not just the Australians some of the bowlers at the North West Stadium's indoor nets had made an even more impressive journey.

The youthful spinners and seamers running in to bowl to the likes of Darren Lehmann and Michael Bevan had come from Hillcrest College in Mutare, Zimbabwe, 1,500km away in order to have the dream opportunity of chancing their arms against the world champions.

They had been hoping to see Zimbabwe take on England at Harare on February 13 but a boycott by Nasser Hussain's put paid to that.

"The boys were so disappointed when that happened," teacher Humphrey Tate told AFP.

But despite the problems in their famine-threatened country, the Hillcrest team and their supporters are not easily deterred and they even overcame a petrol shortage so they could fulfil their planned two-game tour of South Africa.

"One of the boys' mothers drained the fuel from her own cars so we could travel to be here," explained Tate.

"But we managed to play against

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Blessing in 'rainguise'

AFP, Benoni

West Indies skipper Carl Hooper said on Wednesday that the disappointment of his team's washed-out match against Bangladesh would be the springboard for his side's assault on a Super Sixes place.

Hooper had to share the four points when Tuesday's game here was abandoned because of torrential rain but believes the outcome may turn out to be a blessing in disguise for the crucial clash with Sri Lanka in Cape Town on February 28.

"I'm disappointed that we were not able to get four points from this game," said Hooper.

"We can't do anything about the weather. We have been in situations before where the weather saved us. Today it probably saved Bangladesh, that was out of our control so we just have to look forward to the next game," said Hooper.

"I think the important game for us is going to be the one against Sri Lanka. Maybe this is a blessing in disguise for us as we will be in the

right frame of mind to do whatever it takes to get the better of Sri Lanka," Hooper said.

The West Indies had made 244-9 on Tuesday with Bangladesh reaching 32-2 before the Pool B match was called-off.

Meanwhile, the 36-year-old Hooper said he is concerned about his team's fielding and the poor performance of his openers in the tournament.

"We dropped a couple of straight forward catches today. This is something we obviously have got to work on, if we want to go all the way," Hooper said.

"We are going to play much tougher opponents, so we have to take our chances," he added.

Of the openers, he said: "Chris Gayle and Wavell Hinds batted well for us on the Indian tour last year setting up some huge opening stands, scoring at five to seven runs per over.

"Obviously it's a bit of a worry now that they haven't got much together but I think we have to keep backing them. I know that sooner or

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Carl Hooper

PHOTO: STAR FILE