

No Zimbabwean is politicised

AFP, London

None of the current Zimbabwean cricket squad were selected purely on their political affiliation, the chairman of the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) claimed on Monday.

Peter Chingoka rejected the latest of the claims about the squad being chosen because they would not make trouble over the regime of President Robert Mugabe.

International observers have accused Mugabe's regime of rigging last year's general elections and perpetrating widespread human rights abuses.

Chingoka, however, denied claims in the Observer newspaper on Sunday that several of the ZCU board were linked to Mugabe's Zanu-PF government and that the players had only been selected because they promised not to make trouble.

The article follows earlier claims by former captain Alistair Campbell that the squad had been selected because they were 'yes men' and captain Heath Streak whose father, a white farmer, was detained for three days by the police last year and had three quarters of his farm seized under the government Land Laws would not dare rock the boat.

Javed, Imran

FROM PAGE 13 senior players, Salim Malik and Ramiz Raja, were not invited.

"My guess is that Imran's efforts were aimed at trying to create an intrigue against my captaincy."

He also accused Imran of deliberately denying him the chance to try and beat Gary Sobers' then Test record score of 365 during a match against India at Hyderabad in 1983.

Javed was flabbergasted when, having reached 280 not out, Imran decided to declare.

"Off the field at the end of the second day, there was no talk of a declaration. Imran never brought it up overnight and gave me no specific instructions.

"I took this to mean I was being given a chance to go for all possible records. How wrong I was!"

Although Imran led Pakistan to their greatest achievement, victory over England in the 1992 World Cup final, Javed arguably proved the more successful leader in Tests.

They won 14 of the 34 Tests for which he was in charge, with the team winning 14 out of 48 under Imran.

Javed has now been charged with helping an inexperienced Pakistan team find their feet in international cricket, along with captain Rashid Latif.

The signs are encouraging, with victory in the four-nation Sharjah Cup, followed by a place in the final of a Tri-Series in Sri Lanka, where they lost to New Zealand.

Now they face a three-match series in England, where Javed's knowledge of how the wickets behave will be vital to the young batsmen in the squad.

Pakistan supporters will be watching closely, and none more closely than Imran.

Serena speeds

FROM PAGE 13 my position. But once I was under control, I played pretty well," she said.

The Belgian's demeanour on court was in contrast to that of unseeded Petrova, who nervously outlasted compatriot Vera Zvonareva 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 to become the first Russian semifinalist in the women's tournament for almost 30 years.

Petrova's more attacking approach eventually paid off against her 18-year-old opponent, who caused the shock of the women's singles by beating third seed Venus Williams in the fourth round.

The two had met 10 years ago as children, a match Zvonareva remembered as her most memorable experience, having lost 6-0, 6-0. Petrova is the first Russian woman to reach the last four at Roland Garros since Olga Morozova did so in 1975.

The last Russian woman to reach a Grand Slam semifinal was Elena Dementieva at the 2000 U.S. Open.

Harmison owed to Hussain



AFP, London

England fast bowler Stephen Harmison has credited Nasser Hussain with saving his international career.

Harmison said England captain Hussain's much-criticised chats between deliveries during the Ashes tour of Australia had helped him get through spells where he struggled with his direction and lost his run-up.

"I can't thank him enough for the way he handled a young fast bowler who could have gone to pieces," Harmison, 24, told Tuesday's edition of the Daily Mirror.

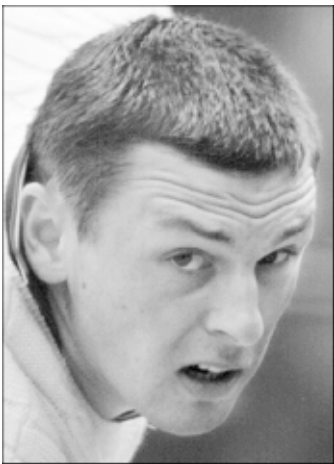
Former England stars such as Ian Botham slammed Hussain's frequent interventions from mid-off, saying they were a hindrance rather than a help to the bowlers.

"One or two ex-players have criticised Nasser for nagging his bowlers too much, but his handling of the situation was brilliant," Harmison added ahead of Thursday's second Test against Zimbabwe at his Riverside home ground.

"He's never told me where to

bowl. All he does is offer you encouragement"

Harmison's tour began in embarrassing fashion when he sent down



STEPHEN HARMISON

seven successive wides in the opening match at Lilac Hill.

He was left out of the team for the first Test at Brisbane but Simon Jones' cruciate ligament injury in that match saw Harmison get his chance.

But during the Perth Test match Harmison lost his run-up and it

looked as if his international career might be over before it had properly started.

And the 6ft 9 inch quick, currently England's fastest bowler, said Hussain's intervention at the WACA had made all the difference.

"For me the biggest issue was easily the Perth Test match where I lost my run-up completely on the second morning and Nasser helped me through the crisis.

"That was the first time in my life I have thought 'Please don't throw me the ball, I don't want to bowl' but his encouragement was priceless.

"I was struggling, but he refused to take me off. He just said: 'Keep going, you'll get it back' and tried to take my mind off it."

Harmison eventually finished the Ashes series with nine wickets at 50 apiece.

Against Zimbabwe, in last month's innings and 92 run first Test win at Lord's, Harmison was markedly less wayward than before although he still bowled too many deliveries the batsmen could leave and finished with match figures of three for 71 from 28 overs.

Hoping for a Key moment



AFP, Chester-le-Street

England batsman Robert Key said Tuesday he hoped his luck would change when the second and final Test against Zimbabwe got underway at the Riverside here later this week.

Key, 24, has been struggling this season and in his seven Tests so far he has only once passed fifty, against Australia at Melbourne in December.

"It's not as if I've been getting out for 10," Key told reporters at the Riverside, the home ground of northeast county Durham, ahead of the venue's first Test on Thursday.

"I've been getting to 30, hitting the ball pretty well but getting out when well set," explained Key who appeared unlucky to be given out caught behind for 18 during England's innings and 92-run first Test victory against Zimbabwe at Lord's last month.

But any fears Key might have had that he was playing for his international place eased last when he was included in England's one-day squad for the home matches

against Pakistan and the triangular series with Zimbabwe and South Africa.

"At the start of the season, one-day cricket was not something I'd targeted. But as soon as I realised they (the selectors) were going for younger guys I knew I was in with a chance. It's a huge confidence boost," Key said.



ROBERT KEY

And he added that the recent return to form of Surrey left-hander Graham Thorpe, whose withdrawal from cricket last season because of personal problems, gave Key his international chance, did not worry

him unduly. "It was fairly obvious he was going to get runs. He's not the worst player in the world."

If Key has yet to nail down an England place as a middle-order batsman he has fitted into the side at short leg, a spot traditionally given to one of a team's younger players as it is one of the most dangerous positions on the field.

"I've often been the youngest player in a team so I've been at short leg. I don't mind it in there. You are always in the game. It makes you concentrate and the day goes quicker."

The first Test as a whole went pretty quickly with England wrapping up the match inside three days. But Key said Zimbabwe would be a tougher side second time around. "They went at the ball pretty hard at Lord's. They were just getting used to the conditions then."

Key has longer knowledge of the Riverside than most of his England team-mates. As a 15-year-old he made his second eleven debut for Kent at the ground. Asked if he made many runs, Key joked: "I made more than then I do now."

But pressed on what he actually scored, Key admitted: "31." Both he and England will hope he improves upon that later this week.

Test spot

FROM PAGE 13 experience where I'll play against some of the best players in the world will only add to that."

Kaif, due to start playing for Derbyshire on Wednesday against Glamorgan at Swansea, is part of a strong contingent that will add an Indian flavour to the county championship this season.

Explosive opener Virender Sehwag (Leicestershire) and left-hander Yuvraj Singh (Yorkshire) are already doing duty for their teams, while Rahul Dravid (Scotland) and Harbhajan Singh (Lancashire) are set to follow early next month.

Shah reminds selectors

AFP/REUTERS, Shenley

A brilliant unbeaten century by Middlesex batsman Owais Shah lit up the final day of the tour match with Zimbabwe here on Monday as it petered out into a draw.

The tourists looked in danger of losing as they lost five wickets for 53 runs to be reeling at 140-5 but an unbeaten partnership of 81 by Grant Flower (43 not out) and vice-captain Tatenda Taibu (37 not out) staved off a demoralising defeat ahead of the second Test which starts on Thursday.

Shah, though, was the star of the show as he hit 101 off just 80 balls and send a message to the England selectors, who had left him out of the one day squad.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the final day of the four-day tour match between Middlesex and Zimbabwe on Monday:

MIDDLESEX: First innings 516-6 declared (R Weston 129, P Weekes 102 not out, M Brown 98, E Joyce 80, O Shah 68)

ZIMBABWE: First innings 401-4 declared (S Carlisle 137, G Flower 65, M Vermeulen 59)

MIDDLESEX: Second innings (overnight 86-1) Strauss c Flower b Price 49 Weston lbw b Friend 41 Shah not out 101 Hutton not out 19 Extras: (lb-7, nb-2, w-3) 12 Total: (For 2 wkts in 38 overs dec) 222

Fall of wickets: 1-74, 2-148 Did not bat: Joyce, Weekes, Brown, Cook, Hunt, Peoploe, Bloomfield

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Friend	9	0	65	1
Nkala	12	2	68	0
Ervine	10	1	51	0
Price	7	0	31	1

ZIMBABWE: Second innings Ebrahim c Weekes b Peoploe 64 Vermeulen c Brown b Hunt 42 Rogers c Bloomfield b Hunt 21

Ervine b Weekes 6 Sibanda b Weekes 0 Taibu not out 37 Flower not out 43 Extras: (b-2, lb-2, nb-4) 8

Total: (For 5 wkts in overs) 221 Fall of wickets: 1-87, 2-93, 3-126, 4-126, 5-140

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bloomfield	7	0	31	0
Cook	6	1	17	0
Hutton	5	2	22	0
Hunt	7	1	28	2
Weekes	19	5	38	2
Peoploe	17	3	58	1
Shah	2	0	14	0
Joyce	2	0	9	0

Result: match drawn.

2nd tri-nation hockey Australia take on India today

AFP, Sydney

Australia is aiming for their second three-nations men's hockey victory over India and Pakistan this week after beating decorated their sub-continental opponents in last week's tournament in Perth.

Australia face India Wednesday in the first match of the second challenge, while Australia take on Pakistan. Both games are in Wollongong.

India are still smarting after going down 1-2 to Australia in the Perth final after leading with only a few minutes left in the showdown.

Wedding bells ringing!



AFP, Paris

Tennis' most famous playing couple Kim Clijsters and Lleyton Hewitt are talking about tying the knot, the Belgian revealed Tuesday.

World number two Clijsters, who has reached the semifinals at the French Open and will turn 20 the day after the women's final Sunday, said that she and her world number one boyfriend Hewitt, who has already been eliminated from the tournament, have discussed getting married.

"We do talk about it sometimes," Clijsters told French television. "But I'm still young. I'm going to be 20 in a

cityzen.

"People have been saying a lot of things. I'm thinking about changing residency, and I spend a lot of time in Australia, but I'm really happy to go home from time to time."

Clijsters' father Leo, a former Belgian international footballer, revealed that she pays the taxman between 50 and 60 per cent of her earnings, much less than footballers in Belgium.

The player from the northern Flemish-speaking part of Belgium admitted that her life has totally changed since reaching the finals here two years ago when she was catapulted to the status of national heroine.

"My life completely changed after the 2001 finals. When I returned all the street was covered



LLEYTON HEWITT

few days. Lleyton, he's 22. So I think we have time."

But Clijsters admitted that she was considering a change in residency because of the amount of taxes she pays in Belgium, and did not rule out becoming an Australian



KIM CLIJSTERS

with flags. I realise how important it is for people, particularly when you play in Paris there are a lot of Belgians who come," added Clijsters, who hopes to become the first Belgian ever to win a Grand Slam event.

Kuerten can't hear the samba



AFP, Paris

Gustavo Kuerten, three French Open crowns to his name, said he

was unable to find his usual samba rhythm Monday as he bowed out in the fourth round to Spanish star in the making Tommy Robredo.

'Guga' set Roland Garros alight when he arrived here as a 20-year-old ranked 66 in the world and promptly beat Spanish two-time



PHOTO: AFP

SINKING FEELING: Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten after losing to Spain's Tommy Robredo in the French Open on Monday.

French fries

AFP, Paris

Belgian star Kim Clijsters is a little superstitious when it comes to what she eats at a major tournament.

The 2001 finalist, girlfriend of men's number one Lleyton Hewitt, said her eating regime that year was a little repetitive.

"Two years ago when I reached the finals I ate the same thing every day. It became difficult for the people who live with me.

"But now Lleyton makes me compromise."

MONEY NOT ALWAYS ROUTE OF ALL EVIL

Money is not always the route of all evil, even if it is not in short supply in the higher echelons of tennis.

The men's champion will take home 840,000 euros and the women's champion 819,000 - but in the 'good old days' of 30 years ago the financial incentives to win were much lower.

Prize-money has increased by some 4000 per cent in money terms since Bjorn Borg first lifted the trophy in 1974.

The cash haul clearly didn't matter much as winning to Yannick Noah, the last Frenchman to triumph here to date in 1983.

Asked what he would do with his prize-money, worth 1000,000 euros at the time, he said: "Damn. I forgot to go and pick up my cheque. I hope they've not gone off on holiday."

MORE TO IT THAN POWER

Serena Williams is the most powerful player in the world, but that alone will not see her home against French hope Amelie Mauresmo in the quarterfinals.

Mauresmo says with the crowd behind her she can neutralise the American's power.

"If she plays the best she's ever plays and makes no mistakes she can beat everyone - but I beat her only two weeks ago (in Rome).

Mentally, that win makes a big difference. I will take my chances - and I'll have fun out there!"

A transport strike in Paris, however, threatened to diminish the centre court crowd getting behind Mauresmo.

MARTINA STILL A MOTIVATOR

Martina Navratilova may have been knocked out of the mixed doubles alongside India's Leander Paes - but at 46 she is still proud to be a role model for athletes who have long reached the veteran stage.

Asked what she still enjoyed about playing the winner of 167 singles titles and 168 doubles titles, including this year's Australian Open mixed doubles, said she was carrying on competing for "the love of the game."

HEWITT HOWLER

Lleyton Hewitt can thank his lucky stars he is a tennis player and not a tipster. Asked after his third round defeat to Tommy Robredo how far the Spaniard would go in the tournament, the Australian shot back "Next round." meaning he would be swept away by three-times former winner Gustavo Kuerten.

Robredo had other ideas, knocking out the Brazilian in four sets to reach the quarter-finals.

It remains to be seen whether Hewitt will suffer the ignominy of Britain's Greg Rusedski who forecast imminent defeat for Pete Sampras after losing to him in a third round five-setter at last year's US Open. Sampras went on to beat Andre Agassi in the final.

champion Sergi Bruguera before adding further titles in 2000 and 2001.

Never before had the swish Roland Garros complex been invaded by hordes of flag-waving, soccer-shirted Brazilian fans, many of whom drummed out a furious samba beat long after their hero had disappeared into the night, having earlier sprayed champagne onto several from a first floor window.

But this time he found Robredo more than a match as Kuerten's legs, now bearing the tell-tale scars of six years of tough battles and his hips, operated on last year, failed to last the pace in a 6-4, 1-6, 7-6, 6-4 win for the Spaniard.

"I should have imposed myself more on the match in that first set," said Kuerten, who began solidly before throwing the set away.

His second set renaissance was all too brief against a player who was cock a hoop after knocking out top seed Lleyton Hewitt in the previous round.

Hewitt scathingly predicted Robredo would go no further.

But the 21-year-old made the Adelaide eat his words, echoes of last year's US Open when Greg Rusedski said Pete Sampras would not last long even though the fading champion had just knocked him out.

A week later Sampras was holding up his record 14th Grand Slam trophy.

Kuerten opined that the game had become more aggressive on clay since he started out - and he lacked a little against Robredo.

"Nowadays you have to play an attacking game and with a lot of aggression.

"(Carlos) Moya, (Juan Carlos) Ferrero, (Guillermo) Coria and (Andre) Agassi don't just volley, they play tough as well and mix their approach work also," said the man who was once the undisputed king of clay.

"Robredo mixed things up very well. He did a lot of drop shots and moved me around the court. I couldn't impose my rhythm."

The hypnotic beat of the samba will not be heard again at this championships.

Mauresmo has no excuses

REUTERS, Paris

Amelie Mauresmo did not try to find an excuse for her 6-1, 6-2 defeat to world number one Serena Williams in the French Open quarterfinals on Tuesday.

Despite being backed by most of the 16,000 fans packed into the centre court tribunes, the fifth-seeded Frenchwoman was simply overwhelmed by the defending champion who looked in a class of her own throughout the 64 minutes of the match.

"I'm not trying to find any excuse for the way I played today," Mauresmo said. "It took me too much time to find my pace. I was too tense at the beginning of the match."

Mauresmo made two double faults on her first service game and found herself trailing 3-0 after just 10 minutes.

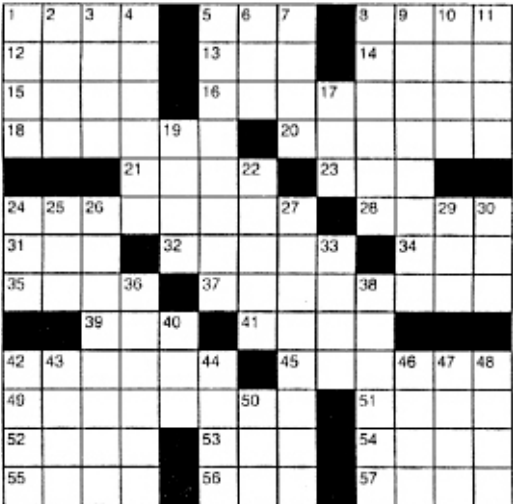
"Serena put a lot of pressure on me. She was very focused from the start while I felt tense. I never managed to feel free enough to play my game."

"I found it hard to move my legs. It was like my arm was stuck to my body when I hit the ball."

The defeat was a great disappointment for Mauresmo, who had hoped to repeat her achievement in the Italian Open semi-finals when she tamed the American in three sets.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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