

Yorkshire want Fleming

BBC ONLINE, London  
Yorkshire are hoping to sign New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming as their second overseas player for the rest of the summer.

Director of Cricket Geoff Cope told the BBC Sport website: "Discussions have taken place and are ongoing."

He confirmed that poor recent results and captain Anthony McGrath's elevation to the England squad were factors in the decision to look to strengthen their batting line-up.

Indian Yuvraj Singh is the only overseas player on the club's books at present following Matthew Elliott's decision to return to Australia because of a knee injury and a family illness.

"Ever since Matthew went back to Australia, we have said that we would look at a replacement if a suitable one came up."

"Yuvraj Singh is a very talented young cricketer, but he is not a seasoned pro," said Cope.

Fleming is one of the most respected figures in world cricket, and the longest serving captain among current Test skippers, having first taken charge in 1997.

He led the Kiwis to a 2-1 Test series victory in England in 1999 and the following year they won the ICC Knockout tournament in Nairobi.

Most recently they won a triangular one-day tournament in Sri Lanka, beating Pakistan in the final.

The 30-year-old has previous experience of county cricket, having played for Middlesex during the 2001 season, when he scored 1,059 runs at an average of 55.73 in the County Championship.

Sumathipala re-elected

Rantunga decries result



AFP/REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka's former World Cup-winning captain Arjuna Ranatunga lashed out at a 'corrupt' rival on Friday after suffering a humiliating defeat in his bid to head the country's cricket administration.

Ranatunga, who garnered just seven votes and was pushed to third place in the three-cornered fight, rejected an offer to work with comfortable winner Thilanga Sumathipala, a Colombo businessman and former head of the cricket board.

"I am an honest person and I can't work with people who are corrupt," Ranatunga said in reply to Sumathipala's offer.

Sumathipala, who received 121 votes out of a possible 144 in the election for the president of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL), was not immediately available for comment.

Ranatunga said he had won more than 100,000 votes at national elections for parliament in December 2001, but managed to get only seven at the elections to the prestigious cricket body.

He thanked the seven clubs and associations that voted for him but said his dismal performance should be an "eye-opener" for the authorities.

The opposition Member of Parliament was always likely to struggle for support after his own home club dumped him and decided last month to vote for Sumathipala.

Ranatunga, who captained Sri Lanka to the World Cup title in 1996, entered politics soon after retiring from cricket in 1999.

Sumathipala said last month that he was expecting to introduce a new level of "transparency" in a bid to restore public confidence in the cricket board, one of the richest sporting bodies in the country.

Sumathipala said one of his immediate priorities was to find a coach for the national team after Dav Whatmore quit last month to join Bangladesh.

Sri Lanka's leading run scorer in Tests and one-dayers, Aravinda de Silva, who recently retired from international cricket, was elected unopposed as Sumathipala's vice-president.

The BCCSL had been managed by government-appointed interim committees for the last 26 months after the decision to dissolve the last elected board, led by Sumathipala, on March 2001.

Sports minister Johnston Fernando announced elections last month following widespread criticism of the interim administration and calls for the return to an elected body.

Sumathipala is the chairman of Sri Lanka Telecom and an experienced cricket administrator whose stated long-term personal ambition is to head the game's world governing body the International Cricket Council (ICC).



PHOTO: AFP  
Sri Lankan businessman Thilanga Sumathipala (L) who was re-elected as president of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka yesterday is seen here getting registered before casting his vote.

Council (ICC).

He was elected president on two previous occasions but both terms were cut short by the government following legal wrangles after a particularly ugly election in 1999 and in 2001 for allegedly violating the sports law.

The cricket board is also facing financial problems after a recent

Singapore tribunal decision that it is liable to pay substantial damages after the cancellation of a multi-million dollar television deal in 2001.

Last week the BCCSL announced a 940,000-dollar loss in 2002.

French fries

AFP, Paris

Justine Henin-Hardenne was wide awake in beating Serena Williams to reach the women's final - but she admits to being a late riser compared with husband Pierre-Yves.

"Pierre-Yves always gets up before me," explains the diminutive star, who turned 20 last Sunday. "On my birthday he forgets to wish me many happy returns for a few minutes! That made me a bit nervous..."

The nerves had gone by the time she came out to see off Serena.

NO FULL SLAM DZEN FOR AMERICANS

Justine Henin-Hardenne's win over Serena Williams put an end to a series of 11 straight Grand Slam finals with at least one American woman involved.

The last all non-American women's final was at Roland Garros three years ago when Frenchwoman Mary Pierce defeated Spaniard Conchita Martinez.

IT'S ALL IN THE HEAD SAYS CORIA

French Open semifinal Guillermo Coria, who was hit with a doping suspension between August 2001 and February 2002 for taking a banned stimulant in a food supplement, warned other players that taking vitamins could ruin their

careers. "It was the saddest moment of my life which allowed me to find out where I was," recalled the Argentine.

"I was naive and took vitamins which were given to me. I really went through a difficult period, I was totally innocent, and can only say to all players to pay attention to the vitamin supplements they give you, there are a lot of contaminated vitamin and it doesn't make any difference to take them, it's just psychological.

"Even now when I'm sick I don't take anything at all. When I had terrible cramps in the quarterfinals I prefer to lose through tiredness than take something. I'm really afraid now."

KIND AGASSI

American legend proved that he was willing to give more than the shirt off his back following his quarter-final loss to Argentine Guillermo Coria, who hero-worshipped the eight-time Grand Slam winner as a child.

"It was the happiest day of my life, a magical moment," said Coria. "He gave me his racquet. I asked for his jersey and he asked if I would not prefer the racquet. It's really the most beautiful present he gave me in my life."

Royal finale

REUTERS, Brussels

Belgium's royal family will travel to the French Open on Saturday to watch the first all-Belgian grand slam tennis final.

King Albert II and his wife Paola will be accompanied to Paris by Crown Prince Philippe and six other royals to watch Kim Clijsters play Justine Henin-Hardenne, the Belgian royal palace said on Friday.

"The King and the Queen absolutely did not want to miss this," a spokesman for the palace said.

The small nation was guaranteed the women's title after Henin-Hardenne clawed her way past defending champion Serena Williams in a dramatic semi-final on Thursday.

World number two Clijsters beat Russia's Nadia Petrova. The French Open is one of the four Grand Slam events, the sport's top tournaments.

Police tackle ticket touts

AFP, Paris

A massive police crackdown against ticket touts at the French Open has led to hundreds of arrests since the tournament began eleven days ago, organisers said Thursday.

Police in Paris' chic 16th district which borders the Roland Garros complex have arrested between 25 and 30 touts daily with estimates that some 200 will have received verbal warnings by the time the tournament ends Sunday.

"We have to congratulate the police," said tournament deputy director Frederic Longuepee, pointing out that the French tennis federation (FFT) have also been active in curbing the lucrative resale of tickets.

"The new management put in place by the FFT has taken the problem by the scruff of the neck."

The black market generates an estimated 17 million euros (20.2 million dollars) during a two-week tournament whose overall revenue is 101.2 million euros (120 million dollars).

Some 70 per cent of the 400,000 tickets sold annually are through club membership, with 20 per cent sold by post and the remaining 10 percent available at the Roland Garros ticket office on the day.

Carry on batting

FROM PAGE 13

"Sri Lanka is a perfect example, I think in only 10 years (from starting Test cricket) they won the World Cup, so anything is possible.

"It's just a matter of having faith in these teams."

As for the Australians' motivation against playing the bottom-ranked Bangladeshis, Waugh said playing for their country should be enough and believed a whitewash in the two-Test and three one-day game series would only show that the team can continue to play at the highest level no matter who the opposition.

"From our point of view it (winning) paints a good picture. It shows we are professional and continue to have high standards," he said. "From Bangladesh's point of view it's just a learning process and hopefully they can take something out of it."

Johnson jolts Zim

FROM PAGE 13  
behind by wicketkeeper Taibu.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the second day of the second Test between England and

Zimbabwe at the Riverside on Friday:  
ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 298-5):  
M. Trescothick c Taibu b Price 43  
M. Vaughan c Ervine b Streak 20  
N. Butcher b Hondo 47  
M. Hussain c Taibu b Hondo 18  
R. Key c Flower b Hondo 4  
A. Stewart lbw b Streak 68  
A. McGrath c Taibu b Blignaut 81  
A. Giles c Ervine b Streak 50  
R. Johnson c Streak b Blignaut 24  
S. Harrison c Vermeulen b Streak 11  
J. Anderson not out 12  
Extras (b-1, lb-5, w-7, nb-25) 38  
Total: (All out in 127.1 overs) 416  
Fall of wickets: 1-49, 2-109, 3-146, 4-152, 5-156, 6-305, 7-324, 8-356, 9-390.

10-416  
Bowler: O M R W  
Streak 34.1 11 64 4  
Blignaut 23 4 95 2  
Hondo 22 1 98 3  
Ervine 3 0 17 0  
Price 40 9 105 1  
Friend 4 0 26 0  
Flower 1 0 5 0  
ZIMBABWE: First innings:  
D. Ebrahim lbw b Anderson 6  
M. Vermeulen lbw b Johnson 0  
S. Carlisle lbw b Johnson 0  
G. Flower c Trescothick b Anderson 8  
T. Taibu not out 16  
S. Ervine c Stewart b Johnson 10  
T. Friend lbw b Johnson 4  
H. Streak lbw b Johnson 4  
A. Blignaut not out 0  
Extras: (nb-1) 4  
Total: (For 7 wickets in 17 overs) 35  
Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-3, 3-11, 4-18, 5-23, 6-31, 7-35  
To bat: R Price, D Hondo  
Bowler: O M R W  
Anderson 7 2 13 2  
Johnson 8 3 18 5  
Harrison 2 1 4 0

Toss: England  
Umpires: Darrell Hair (AUS) and David Orchard (RSA)  
Third umpire: Peter Willey (ENG)  
Match referee: Clive Lloyd (WIS)

Forget Paris



AFP, Paris

A tearful Serena Williams let the mask slip Thursday as she saw her quest for a fifth straight Grand Slam singles crown hit the buffers with a three-set loss to Belgian blonde Justine Henin-Hardenne in a thrilling French Open semifinal.

Henin-Hardenne's 6-2, 4-6, 7-5 win sends her into a mouthwatering final on Saturday against compatriot Kim Clijsters to guarantee a first ever Belgian Grand Slam champion - and leave Serena emotionally drained.

The defeat left Serena's winning run in Grand Slam matches stuck on 33, going back to the first round of last year's Roland Garros.

Her last defeat at a Slam before Thursday was in the US Open final of 2001, that match lost to sister Venus.

Serena did not play last year's Australian Open owing to injury. But she had become so used to winning that going out here was a shock to the system - as was the lack of crowd support for her.

"It's a little difficult. I've had to learn to fight all my life - got to learn to keep smiling. If you smile things will work out," she said, wiping away sudden tears.

"Deep down it hurts," said Serena, who had thrashed French fifth seed Amelie Mauresmo in the quarterfinals.

"I think it's bad when people start booing between serves," she said. "But she played very well and deserved to win."

"I've just got to be a little stronger next time. I don't think being an American had anything to do with it -



PHOTO: AFP  
DOWN AND OUT: Serena Williams senses she is losing her way against Belgium's Justine Henin-Hardenne.

I don't think what's going on between France and America right now had anything to do with it," she added, referring to the heightened

political tension between Paris and Washington over the Iraq conflict which has hit Franco-US relations hard.

Serena's inability to swat the never-say-die Henin-Hardenne delighted a partisan crowd firmly behind the Belgian - and gives the sport a boost after the 21-year-old American's dominance over the past 12 months had seen her romp through the French Open, Wimbledon, the US Open and then the Australian Open for a "Serena Slam", if not a calendar version which will now have to wait for another year.

"I definitely don't need a shrink - I'm just going to be more ready next time," added the American.

The power and muscle of Serena and Venus, who bowed to her younger sibling in those Slam finals, may have taken the women's game to a higher physical level - but it has caused interest to sag in some quarters with the outcome of too many tournaments becoming all too predictable.

Had Serena, now with a 21-4 win-loss record at the French Open, won the event she would have tied Australian legend Margaret Court for fifth place in the all-time list of Grand Slam winning streaks in the Open Era stretching back to 1968.

Instead, she will now go into Wimbledon with much food for thought despite boasting a majestic 31-3 win-loss record for the year.

Defeat hinged on a lack of concentration in the deciding set, as well as some wayward shots, after Henin-Hardenne had all but blown her away in the opener.

And it was back to the drawing board for the champion as she hurried off court with the jeers of the anti-American crowd ringing in her ears.

Mahmud retained

FROM PAGE 13  
office.  
PROVISIONAL UNDER-23 SQUAD

- Nafees Iqbal Khan, Aftabuddin, Nazimuddin, Mazharul Haque Chowdhury, Rajin Saleh Alam, Anwar Hossain (wicketkeeper), Habib Mohammad Mobalek, Enamul Haque junior, Mosaddeq Hossain, Ali Arman, Arif Hossain, Talha Jubair, Humayun, Alamgir Kabir, Ashraf Haque, Shafaq al-Zabir, Sumon Saha and Gazi Alamgir.

Dyson named Lankan coach

REUTERS, Colombo

Former Australian batsman John Dyson will be Sri Lanka's next coach, newly-elected board president Thilanga Sumathipala said on Friday.

"We will be entering into a memorandum of understanding with John Dyson," Sumathipala announced at a news conference.

The 48-year-old will replace stand-in coach Duleep Mendis, who took over from Colombo-born Australian Dav Whatmore, after the West Indies tour that finishes on July 1 in Jamaica.

Dyson played in 30 Test matches for Australia between 1977 and 1984 scoring 1359 runs.

BD to play in Asian soccer qualifiers

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh will take part in the Asian Under-17 and Under-20 football qualifiers to be held in October.

"As per Asian Football Confederation's directives we must take part in the competitions," Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) general secretary Anwarul Haque Helal said yesterday.

Bangladesh were placed in the Central and South Asian zone but names of the opponents could not be known, Helal said.

He added: "We will try to host our qualifying round matches of both the events and hopefully we get at least one."

Tasty Stew

FROM PAGE 13  
still well behind ex-skipper Graham Gooch's England record of 8,900.

However, with five home Tests against South Africa still to come after this one, Stewart could yet surpass West Indies great Viv Richards' total of 8,540 runs and move into seventh place in the overall list before the season is finished.

Verkerk storms into final

FROM PAGE 13  
had completed a miserable tiebreak by double faulting.

"He was much better in the first set than I was - but then I took more risks on his serve and also in the tiebreak. All my friends wanted to come - and it was great to have their support."

"But I wasn't so cool - I was really nervous."

A tight opening set saw a ninth ace from the 1.91m Verkerk, dwarfing his opponent by 16 centimetres, go level at 6-6 to force the tiebreak.

There, Verkerk stepped up his game and took it 7-4, a brilliant backhand having brought him back from 0-2.

Coria responded by throwing his racquet and grazing a ballgirl.

Having seen off 1999 champion Andre Agassi in the quarterfinals,

the Argentine, who came here having lifted the Hamburg masters, was a hot favourite to beat Verkerk who prior to this tournament had never won a single Grand Slam match in his life.

But Verkerk's monstrous serves and all-court style had seen off 1998 winner Carlos Moya in his quarterfinal in five sets - the Spaniard his third, seeded victim after Vince Spadea of the United States and Germany's Rainer Schuttler, the Australian Open finalist.

Verkerk's run here has already taken him to the brink of the top 10 in the ATP Champions Race, the barometer to season form. Coria stands third behind Ferrero and Agassi.

Coria, putting his tiebreak loss behind him, broke at the start of the second set but Verkerk scored his

first break of the match in some style, taking the Argentine's serve to love with a superb backhand in the fourth game.

He then moved 3-2 clear before Coria misfielded a ball following an off-target first serve, spraining his left thumb in the process.

But the 21-year-old nicknamed El Mago (the magician) gritted his teeth and moved to 40-15 on the Verkerk serve in the ninth game when a Dutch half volley went astray.

Coria fired his first break point wide on the backhand, then netted a routine forehand.

A pair of volleys from close in gave Verkerk the game and the orange-clad hordes backing the underdog roared their approval.

A backhand down the line and two more wayward Coria forehands in the 10th game handed Verkerk a two-set lead and, often serving at around 200 kph - some 50 kph faster than his rival - he maintained his momentum into the start of the third.

Coria broke for 3-2 in the third - but Verkerk broke right back. Both men then traded further breaks before Verkerk again cranked up his serve to move 6-5 clear. But Coria held to bring about the tiebreak.

This time Verkerk started like an express train and moved to 3-0 with two mini-breaks after a bludgeoned backhand and then a forehand.

A 19th ace by Verkerk - to one for Coria - and then an unreturnable serve took the man from Leiderdorp to 5-0.

A netted Coria forehand made it six match points and the Argentine, totally drained by now and having been hammered on the outright winners count 62 to 31, threw in a double fault to end his misery.

He wrapped himself in a towel and left the centre court - but to a standing ovation - before Verkerk took the plaids and a place in the trophy match.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 36 Purple, in a 1 Head cook 5 Try the tea 8 Beyond control 12 Hindu princess 13 Standard 14 Donated 15 Within newsweek 16 Literary collection 17 Verve 18 Rudiments 20 Al Hirschfeld's daughter 22 "Blondie," e.g. 26 Breast-pocket insert 29 Old hand 30 Kitchy 31 Follow instructions 32 Mayo holder 33 Kittenish cry 34 Second-stringer 35 Ballmore paper

DOWN 1 Grouch 2 Marcell Man 3 kova of tennis 4 Eve's grandson 5 Overly choosy 6 Holm or Fleming 7 Vikon's partner? 8 Faculty office worker 9 Burkum 10 Eggs 11 Under-standing 19 Coquet-ish 21 Ending for real 23 -- Trump 24 "The Music Man" locale 25 Survey 26 "Bonanza" brother 27 Touch 28 Home of Lincoln 32 1955 film about a board game 33 Tile art 35 Moie, maybe 36 Literary inits. 38 Map within a map 39 Shoppers' needs 42 Mathos 43 "I cannot tell --" 44 Contained 45 British "inc." 46 Scull need 48 Plural possessive

Solution time: 24 mins.

12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55

CRYPTOQUIP

U P P U C E I F Z H I R Y D Z .  
I Y H D B V F G J E A I C B F D S  
P C A Y I X C B U C R " G S F  
D B H . A H I D B H X V H J ."  
Yesterday's Cryptquip: I ALMOST ALWAYS STAY AWAY FROM FUNERALS. I GUESS I'M SIMPLY NOT A MOURNING PERSON  
Today's Cryptquip Clue: B equals N  
The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.