

Mike, Jacques' mentor

Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

Jacques Rudolph said here Monday that he aimed to follow the advice of former England captain Michael Atherton.

Atherton was renowned for his ability to concentrate for long periods and Rudolph, who had a conversation with the opening batsman, told reporters at Edgbaston here Monday: "He said class players are the ones who can compartmentalise things.

"When they need to concentrate on a certain thing they do."

Rudolph made an unbeaten 71 in South Africa's seven-wicket NatWest triangular series one-day international win over England at Old Trafford on Thursday.

During that match he shared an unbroken stand of 145 with in-form batsman Jacques Kallis (82 not out).

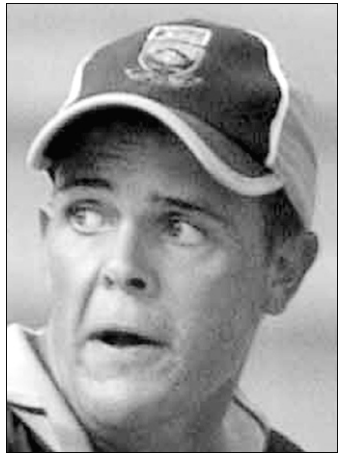
Rudolph said Kallis, 27, was the perfect example of the point Atherton was making, having also made two series hundreds despite his father's ongoing battle against cancer, during the course of South Africa's march to Saturday's Lord's final against England.

But before then South Africa must play England at Edgbaston in a day-night triangular match on Tuesday before facing Zimbabwe at Hampshire's Rose Bowl ground on Thursday.

"It will give us the mental edge if we beat them (England) tomorrow and take that into the final," Rudolph said.

At the weekend Rudolph, 23, was described as the best South African left-hander since Graeme Pollock by his nephew Shaun Pollock, the former Proteas captain and still the team's new-ball spearhead.

That was high-praise considering that Graeme Pollock's Test batting average of 60.97 is second



JACQUES RUDOLPH

only to Australia's Sir Donald Bradman's 99.94 in the all-time list, while the likes of Gary Kirsten and current skipper Graeme Smith have followed him as South African left-handed batsman.

However, Transvaal's Rudolph has already made some cricket history of his own.

In April, against Bangladesh, he became only the fifth player in history to score a double century on Test debut.

And last year in the Lancashire

League traditionally one of English cricket's strongest club competitions he made five successive hundreds for Lowerhouse, surpassing the 51-year-old record of West Indies great Sir Everton Weekes who scored three consecutive centuries for Bacup in 1951.

However, Rudolph played down his achievement. "I had to assess the wickets first. It was only in the latter part of the season that I scored five hundreds."

Rudolph was equally calm about the prospect of playing at Lord's, a major milestone in the career of any cricketer.

"As a young player you can get caught up in the hype of playing at Lord's. You just have to control the controllables."

"But to win there would be great," Rudolph, whose career has not been an uninterrupted climb to the top, admitted.

In November 2001 what should have been his Test debut against India at Centurion was eventually stripped of Test status after match referee Mike Denness was refused permission to officiate following Indian objections.

And in January of this year Rudolph again missed out on a Test bow when, after being included in the team to face Australia at Sydney, he was replaced by Justin Ontong after United Cricket Board of South Africa chief Percy Sonn insisted there had to be more non-white players in the team.

"I have no hard feelings against Ontong. Why should I, he did nothing wrong," Rudolph insisted. "You will have good and bad experiences throughout your career."

Gough's to prove himself

Cricket

AFP, Bristol

Darren Gough will have to prove his fitness in first-class cricket if he is to earn an England Test recall, coach Duncan Fletcher has said.

Former Zimbabwe captain Fletcher was speaking after Yorkshire quick Gough bowled the team to a NatWest triangular series one-day international victory against Zimbabwe here on Sunday.

Gough took four for 26 from nine overs as the Africans were dismissed for just 92 their lowest one-day international score against England in a match the hosts won by six wickets to guarantee their place in Saturday's Lord's final against South Africa.

But Gough, 32, has been troubled by a succession of knee injuries which, until England's one-day campaign this season, had sidelined him from international cricket for the best part of a year.

And Fletcher said Gough still had much to do if he was to make it into the team for the first Test against South Africa at Edgbaston starting on July 24.

"The only guy who knows whether he is fit enough for Test cricket is Darren. To bowl 25 overs one day and maybe 15 the next, and stand in the field, is a hell of a lot

different to one-day cricket.

"Maybe he will need the test of another four-day game for Yorkshire to see if he can do it.

"We need the experience of a fit Darren Gough in the Test side. We've just got to make sure he is fit enough to be out there for five or six sessions."

Earlier this month England saw Gough's regular Test new-ball partner Andrew Caddick ruled out for the rest of the season with a back injury.

James Anderson, Richard Johnson and Stephen Harmison all had their moments in England's two innings Test wins over Zimbabwe earlier this season but all three are still inexperienced at Test level.

And England could yet find a role for Gough in five-day cricket with South Africa set to field a far stronger batting line-up than Zimbabwe.

Gough, however, has played down suggestions on Sunday that he could return to England's Test side for the first time in two years.

One-day skipper Michael Vaughan said he believed his Yorkshire teammate could return to face South Africa in the first Test, which begins on July 24.

"It is up to Darren [to decide] how his knee is and whether he wants to put himself up for Test matches," said Vaughan.

"He got his four-for in this match (against Zimbabwe) and throughout the (NatWest Series) tournament he has bowled well and been an invaluable member of the squad. He has been a lynchpin in the team."

Victoria Club bridge

PRESS RELEASE, Dhaka

The following are the results of the open weekly pair bridge contest organised by Victoria Sporting Club on June 26 at the club's premises.

North-South: First: Md Bashirul Islam and Ashrafuddin of Victoria Sporting Club, Second: Das Deb Prasad and Mahmudul Hassan Kiron of Picnic Bridge Club, East-West: First: Al-Haj Moinuddin Ahmed Manu Bhai and Abdul Latif of Victoria Sporting Club, Second: SM Rejaul Karim and ASM Kamruzzaman Shohag of Bangladesh Bank Club.

In all 16 pairs took part in the competition. The Mitchell movement event was conducted by AKM Azizur Rahman, Chief Tournament Director.

Tour de Australia!

AFP, Sydney

Australians on Tuesday basked in the glow of their cyclists dominating the early stages of the Tour de France.

The news from France couldn't get any better for Australians - Brad McGee in yellow for the third night, Robbie McEwen in green for the second day and young Baden Cooke bagging his first stage to pull on the white jersey.

The national news agency Australian Associated Press dubbed it "Le Tour d'Australie" on an unprecedented day of Australian success in the world's greatest cycling race.

"How much better can it be? It really only can get better if an Australian wins the Tour," Cycling Australia president Mike Victor said on Tuesday.

"As far as road racing goes, this has got to be up there as one of our best performances ever."

Monday's results would have been unthinkable even six years ago when Australians had only won two stages in the tour's history.

Now Australians dominate the headlines in one of the world's most watched sporting events in its centenary year.

But Australians are realistic about their chances of winning the race overall with the gruelling mountain climbs to come where American great Lance Armstrong is expected to excel in his quest for a fifth consecutive victory.

Simons sings

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South Africa's bowlers were subjected to a blistering assault at The Oval by England openers Marcus Trescothick and Vikram Solanki, who both made hundreds.

Simons admitted that the bowling had been a concern but said that the way his attack had improved throughout the tournament had pleased him.

"I was a little bit concerned about our bowling. I felt we weren't bowling in right areas during the warm-up games and it showed when we came up against a class pair like Solanki and Trescothick."

"It'd been good to see the guys hitting the areas we discussed. That's been our biggest improvement."

England call

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Saturday's Lord's final, Giles, 30, returning on his home ground, replaced Durham fast bowler Stephen Harmison in the only change to the England team that beat Zimbabwe by six wickets at Bristol on Sunday.

Giles has only taken one wicket in six one-day internationals this season. But England's chairman of selectors, David Graveney, told Tuesday's Daily Express: "He is our number one spinner and he will bounce back."

Graveney, himself a former left-arm spinner, added: "It is a racing certainty that he will still play a big part in our future."

When the teams last met in the series, South Africa beat England by seven wickets at Old Trafford on Thursday.

But England beat South Africa by six wickets in the tourists' triangular opener at The Oval on June 28.

Nafees sparkles



PHOTO: AFP

The pack arrives in Sedan at the end of the second stage of the 90th Tour de France between la Ferte-sous-Jouarre and Sedan on July 7.

Tennis

REUTERS, Zurich

One was a media superstar who retired from top flight tennis due to her injuries. The other is a down-to-earth hero whose time appears to have just begun.

When Roger Federer became the first Swiss man to win a grand slam title at Wimbledon on Sunday, there were inevitable comparisons with 1997 when his compatriot and one-time doubles partner Martina Hingis lifted the women's trophy.

At 21, Federer is just one year younger than Hingis, but their careers and characters could not be further apart.

"They are two totally different personalities," Swiss Tennis Federation president Christine Ungricht told the news agency.

Brought up on a rigorous diet of training and tournaments, Hingis hit the headlines young, becoming world number one at 16 and attracting the media spotlight with her on-court tantrums and disagreements with her mother and coach Melanie Molitor.

Level-headed Federer, the softly-spoken man from the Basel region who was overwhelmed by his win, was tipped for stardom since becoming world number one junior in 1998 but took his time to get to the top.

His success is seen as a result of his close-knit team of trainer, physio, family and girlfriend.

"They followed totally different paths. But Martina and Roger are both exceptional players as they have to be to win," Ungricht said. "Martina wrote sporting history in Switzerland but Roger is now doing the same."

Hingis retired from the top flight after being dogged by ankle injuries and increasingly frustrated by her inability to handle today's power hitters. In February she ruled out a return to spend more time studying at her home outside Zurich.

She hailed Federer's win on Monday, telling BBC newspaper: "Congratulations! Roger was masterful, it was very impressive. Winning at Wimbledon is a fantastic feeling. Something unforgettable."

Le Temps newspaper reflected on Hingis's exit from the sport: "Even though it was unfinished, her work marked an era."

"Martina Hingis won everything, except Roland Garros. At 22, defeated by the wear and tear of power and the pressure of a new generation, she took her final bow."

Now Federer's 7-6, 6-2, 7-6 victory against Australian Mark Philippoussis on Centre Court, and the tears he shed at the prize ceremony, have cemented the media's latest love affair.

"No, tennis is not yet dead! Roger Federer is the saviour who we've been waiting for," the French-language Tribune de Geneve said on its front page, heralding the "Federer Era".

Federer himself, it seems, will need some time to get used to his new status. "Before I was just a good tennis player -- now I am a celebrity," he told Reuters in an interview on Monday.

Observers say that Federer's success lies in his ability to keep his feet on the ground in the dizzying whirl of tennis.

"I have known Roger since he was young," Ungricht said. "He is a relaxed guy. He has a good relationship with the media, his statements are on the ball, he is very real and enjoys a joke."

While his Swedish trainer Peter Lundgren and physio Pavel Kovac look after his fitness and his game, his 25-year-old girlfriend Miroslava Vavrinec acts as sponsorship agent and press officer. Federer is also his own manager.

"He is now marketing himself like a business," Ungricht said. "He is his own man."

His family also stress they never pushed him into the game.

"We have never pushed Roger's progress -- really never," his father Robert told Swiss media. "Even when he was just knee-high he was already running down the street with a tennis racket."

"Even today he still likes coming

home, back to the family."

Federer has said himself he is aware of the pressure to fill the void left by Hingis's retirement, especially among young Swiss players inspired by her meteoric rise to the top.

"She's only a year older than me," Federer said earlier this year. "I'm just getting started now and she'd already achieved so much and just quit."

"Martina is still very well liked...but of course there was a lot of jealousies because she was so young, so famous, so rich, so good...it's tough for Swiss people to accept that."

Hingis, who was named after Martina Navratilova, picked up a tennis racket aged two and played her first professional tournament aged 14, inspiring a generation.

"Martina really created a trend in that she began training professionally when she was young," Ungricht said.

But by taking the longer route to success, Federer has bought himself a certain wisdom and maturity in the process. But he will have to work hard to remain on top.

"Look at the professionals today: they play so much and are under so much pressure. It depends what kind of person you are, whether or not you enjoy it. But you have to work so hard to stay at this level. It doesn't come for free."

WICB impresses ICC

FROM PAGE 13

region and a key milestone was the completion of the Master Plan for the tournament.

Following the ICC Forum, Malcolm Speed, the ICC Chief Executive Officer, observed that Dehring's presentation had been well received by the delegates.

"It provided an opportunity for cricket's leaders from around the world to understand and appreciate the way in which the West Indies is preparing to stage the biggest event in international cricket the ICC Cricket World Cup

in 2007," remarked Speed.

Ehsan Mani, the recently elected President of the ICC, also expressed his appreciation of the information that Dehring shared with members of the world body and the media.

"The presentation by Chris gave the cricket world an excellent understanding of the enthusiasm and professionalism that the West Indies is bringing to staging the ICC Cricket World Cup," he said.

Dehring also informed the delegates that the cricket officials

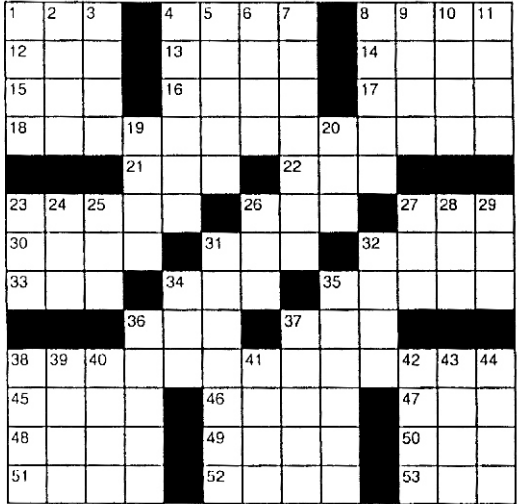
in the West Indies understood that the world expected international standard stadium facilities, quality support services, enhanced security, efficient event management and commercial responsibility.

"We understand that this event has to be professionally managed and, to this end, a team of dedicated professionals with expertise in areas such as venue development, cricket operations, and event management will be hired to help us deliver a truly world class event with a Caribbean flavour," he said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 1 Roggao-like music 4 "Repeat, please" 8 Colorless 12 With it 13 "Arrive-derci, --" 14 Puerto 15 Knock one's socks off 16 Ms. Brock-ovich 17 Canyon phenomenon 18 Kids' game 21 "Monty Python" opener 22 Part of UNLV 23 Perfume ingredient 26 Lustrous black 27 Plagiarize 30 Fight the clock 31 Bankroll 32 Emanation 33 Resort 34 "— the ramparts" 35 Rage 36 Tyke 37 Squid squirt 38 Steven-son's 45 Winged 46 Mr. Sharif 47 "Throw into the mix" 48 Colombian city 49 Chaplin prop 50 Humorous one 51 Dandling site 52 Recognized 53 TV "Scienco Guy" Bill 1 Persian bigwig 2 Fuzzy fruit 3 Mimicked 4 Chaplin 5 Dilemma over 6 Surround-ed by 7 In knots 8 Apparel 9 Houston campus 10 Rue the run 11 Reserve 19 Green acres 20 Feedbag lidbit 23 "— Miniver" 24 Puppy's cry 25 Nipper's co. 26 Pickle holder 27 Floor cover 28 Mined-over matter 29 Slot machine symbol 31 Marriage 32 Egyptian cross 34 Grease 35 Charles' brother 36 — eleison 37 Foolish 38 Moolah 39 Panache 40 Hardy 41 — for All Seasons" 42 Exhibit ennui 43 Crucial time 44 Advan-tage

Solution time: 23 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

Yesterday's Cryptquip: WHENEVER TWO CARDIAC SURGEONS TALK, YOU WOULD THINK THEY HAVE A HEART TO HEART. Today's Cryptquip Clue: I equals G 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.

Bad news for White

BBC ONLINE, London

Craig White's hopes of forcing his way back into the England squad this summer look remote after a fresh injury setback.

The 33-year-old was forced to leave the field during Yorkshire's match against Surrey on Sunday after suffering a recurrence of his side injury while bowling.

White, who had an operation to remove two inches of rib at the start of the season, was due to meet Yorkshire's physio on Tuesday to assess the extent of the damage.

"It has been sore since I started bowling against Somerset at Taunton, but I knew and I was just hoping it would gradually get better," White told the Yorkshire Post.

"Then on Sunday I tried to bowl a bouncer at Mark Butcher but as soon as I had released the ball I had excruciating pain in the same area."

"It was as if someone has stabbed me with a knife."

School chess

FROM PAGE 13

While nine players earned maximum points in the Class I-V group. They included: Indronil (Kolkata), Shiplu, Sifat, Marjan, Saif, Mohi, Robin, Erfan and Sayed.

In the second round Rahul beat Jasim, Shahin beat Ripon, Sagar beat Rupal, Sandipan beat Masum, Arifin beat Anwar, Shakin beat Obayed, Debanjan beat Razib, Hasib beat Tanver, Sabber beat Abishek, Awlad beat Shishir, Liza beat Mony, Payel beat Yeon, Mimi beat Evana, Anne beat Parul, Anu beat Shubannita, Saima beat Ridi, Shirin beat Mithila, Indronil beat Shakib, Shiplu beat Rabbi, Sifat beat Tanveer, Marjan beat Sumon, Saif beat Nayeem and Mohi beat Sabber.

The third round starts at 3pm today.

Harbhajan won't have surgery

CRICINFO, undated

Harbhajan Singh will return home from Australia without having undergone surgery on his injured finger.

Initial tests at a Melbourne hospital had indicated that he needed an operation immediately, but an official of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) told the Times of India that Harbhajan would "undergo the surgery only if pain recurs".

Danvers improves

Athletics

BBC ONLINE, Zagreb

Britain's Natasha Danvers shaved 0.59 seconds off her personal best to win the 400m hurdles in Zagreb.

Danvers ran a time of 54.32 seconds at the IAAF Grand Prix One Borisa Hanzekovica Memorial event, just four days after clocking her previous best of 54.91 seconds in the Paris Golden League meet-

ing. "I want to be a contender for medals and give Britain what they have been waiting for since Sally Gunnell," said the 25-year-old Croydon-born runner.

Sandra Glover was second in 54.64secs, just ahead of fellow American Brenda Taylor.

Aziz Zakari of Ghana won the 100m in 10.17secs ahead of Sean Crawford of the United States in second and Britai's Jason Gardener in third.