

**Saints slam Leeds' Strachan bid**

Southampton chairman Rupert Lowe has accused English Premiership rival's Leeds of breaking every rule in the book in their bid to poach manager Gordon Strachan.

Strachan has emerged as the favourite for the Elland Road job following the departure of Peter Reid, but Lowe insisted Saturday that he has received no official approach from Leeds.

"Strachan is very happy at Southampton and we are very happy with him," Lowe told The Sun newspaper. "But Leeds are breaking every rule in the book. We have heard nothing from them and I have definitely not been in talks with Leeds. But I know they are trying to dislodge Gordon as our manager. They are trying to induce him by putting things out through the media."

**Kirtley staying**

Anderson's injury was England's second blow in the space of 24 hours after Steve Harmison, the main strike bowler, failed a fitness test on his injured lower back.

"The opportunity to play would be great but my concern now is for Jimmy (Anderson)," said Kirtley, picked originally only for the one-day series currently being played.

"He has worked very hard over the summer and when he is in the team England have a very good side."

**There should**

Indian coach John Wright said he doubted the controversy would affect the touring side in Australia.

"That story has developed since we left the country and really it will run its course," Wright said on Saturday.

"We really have no knowledge of it whatsoever, so it will not be unsettling to the touring party at all."

The scandal is the biggest to hit Indian cricket since the match-fixing saga in 2000 which led to life bans on former captain Mohammad Azharuddin and ex-Test player Ajay Sharma and five-year bans for internationalists Ajay Jadeja and Manoj Prabhakar.

Kale faces a life-ban if found guilty.

**Ganguly admits**

World Cup and the fast bowlers took wickets.

"At the end of the day, whether it's the one-day game or Test cricket, you've got to put the ball in the right place and take wickets," he said.

Ganguly added his team had a core of experienced batsmen who had toured Australia before, and that India's once lamentable overseas record had improved markedly in the past few years.

"We struggled a bit in the mid-90s, but we've started to play well in the past few years, whether it's in England, the West Indies or the World Cup," he said.

"It's an aim for us to do well overseas and to play against the best side in the world will be a great challenge for us and we're really looking forward to it."

India play Victoria in a three-day game in Melbourne, starting on Tuesday.

The first Test in Brisbane starts on December 4.

**Mashrafe faces**

during a practice session before the third match against West Indies.

Mashrafe was back to bowling in the home series against South Africa and then toured Australia and Pakistan earlier this year before breaking down yet again in Chittagong on October 31.



RUGBY TACKLE! Manchester United's Ruud van Nistelrooy is tripped by Blackburn's Andy Todd (L) during their Premiership clash at Old Trafford yesterday.

**Premiership Nistelrooy lifts MU**

Ruud van Nistelrooy picked up where he left off for Holland in midweek with his 12th goal of the season as Manchester United were made to sweat for a 2-1 win over Blackburn at Old Trafford on Saturday.

United had appeared to be on track for a comfortable victory when Brazilian midfielder Kleberson added to van Nistelrooy's 24th-minute strike with the first goal of his United career, seven minutes before the break.

But Blackburn got back into the match when Paul Gallagher's pass

allowed Australian midfielder Brett Emerton to spring the United offside trap just after the hour mark and the Old Trafford crowd had to endure a nervous finale before seeing the three points secured.

Quinton Fortune, starting in midfield rather than at left-back, was United's most influential player in the first half, making both goals.

The first came after a delicate chip over Blackburn's back four that left van Nistelrooy with only Brad Friedel to beat.

The Dutchman was able to pull the ball down before lashing it past the Blackburn goalkeeper and in off the post from eight yards.

It was the Dutchman's fourth goal

in the space of four days after his hat-trick in Holland's 6-0 demolition of Scotland in their Euro 2004 play-off second leg on Wednesday.

Blackburn briefly rallied and Tim Howard had to make a good save to keep out a Matt Jansen header before United doubled their lead with a slick move in the 38th minute.

Van Nistelrooy chased down Roy Keane's pass through the inside right channel before cutting the ball back for Fortune, who might have shot but opted instead to square the ball into the path of Kleberson, who finished with a precise side-footed shot.

Only the alertness of Friedel prevented Keane from making it three shortly before the interval, the

American keeper getting down smartly to keep out a fierce drive from the Manchester United skipper.

It was a totally different story after the interval however as Blackburn took the game to United.

Dwight Yorke had a goal ruled off for offside before Emerton's superbly timed run allowed him to get clear of the United back four and score with a chipped finish that van Nistelrooy would have been proud of.

That set the scene for a final onslaught but despite large amounts of territorial domination, Blackburn never seriously threatened Howard's goal in the closing stages.

More sunshine is expected on Sunday.

**Law's cancer battle**

United in 305 appearances and helped the club to its 1963 FA Cup victory over Leicester City, scoring the opening goal in their 3-1 victory at Wembley Stadium.

In all he scored 41 FA Cup goals - the second highest haul in the 20th century - but famously "lost" six FA Cup goals when an FA Cup match against Luton Town was abandoned in 1961 with City leading 6-2 at the time. Law did score in the replayed match -- but City lost it 3-1.

He won two League Championships with Manchester United in 1965 and 1967 and was named European Footballer of the Year in 1964, but he missed the 1968 European Cup final success over Benfica because of injury.

In April 1974 he back-heeled a goal for City in a Manchester derby at Old Trafford, which sealed United's relegation to the former second division. It was a goal he never applauded and was also his last touch in league football.

He retired after winning the last of his 55 caps for Scotland in the 1974 World Cup finals having scored a total of 300 goals in 585 club matches and has since worked in the media.

**Alfaz spares seniors'**

The national team was lacking ideas and found very difficult to act as a cohesive unit having only trained together for a couple of days.

"How badly my players perform today shows the lack of training. You can't expect a combination without working at least ten days with the whole team," said a dejected Tiju.

"We will have to get the right result at home otherwise it will be very difficult in the second leg on November 30 because we will be playing minus ten degrees in Dushanbe," said the Bangladesh coach.

National defender Hasan-al-Mamun attributed poor training due to the Federation Cup, which concluded on November 20.

"We played five matches in space of nine days in the recently concluded Federation Cup that's why most of the players are tired. Besides, some players are also carrying injuries. So, it is unfair to expect too much from us," said Hasan Al Mamun.

But most of the national players complained of poor planning on the part of the Bangladesh Football Federation since their glorious victory at the SAFF Championship in Dhaka in January.

"We had a tremendous preparation under Austrian Gorge Kottan for the SAFF Championship and we won the

**Wessels' denial**

title because of that. But nine months have passed and look everything has changed. Actually nobody is serious to care for us these days," observed Mamun.

Midfield workhorse Arif Khan Joy also agreed with Mamun.

"You see not a single top BFF official came to see the match, so you can easily understand that how indifferent they are."

racist remark about two black players. The Eastern Province Herald newspaper said on Friday that Wessels is alleged to have told Johann Louw at a net practice on October 23: "Stop talking nonsense to those two animals, I want you to bowl now."

Louw was with team players Lyall Meyer and Deon Carolus at the time.

Louw, however, has provided Wessels' legal team with a sworn affidavit saying "the incident never took place," according to the newspaper.

The initial complaint against Wessels was made to the Eastern Province Cricket Union by the chairman of club side Gelvandale, who Meyer and Carolus play for.

**Latif in hot water again**

Former Pakistan cricket captain and wicketkeeper Rashid Latif faces disciplinary action for criticising Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and its policies in a critical television interview, an official said Friday.

"Latif has been served a show cause notice for a television interview and the PCB disciplinary committee headed by Justice (retired) Amir Alam will hear the case on a date to be announced later," said PCB spokesman Samiul Hasan.

Latif, whose fight against match fixing has put his career at risk, admitted that he breached the players' code of conduct but stands by claims aired Thursday night that the board's selection process was fraught with inconsistencies.

"I couldn't wait and told the public whatever I felt was wrong," Latif told this news agency.

"The coach Javed Miandad and then chairman PCB Tauqir Zia intervened in the selection process and that detracted the rebuilding process which started off well," Latif had said.

He also criticised the PCB's chief selector Aamir Sohail and Javed in a newspaper column earlier this week.

Latif, who has played 166 one-dayers and 37 Tests for Pakistan, pulled out of the two-match Test series against South Africa last month.

He was asked to abandon retirement plans and lead Pakistan's revamped side after their first round

exit from the World Cup in March.

He led Pakistan in the quadrangular tournament win in Sharjah, to a runners-up spot in a tri-series in Sri



RASHID LATIF

Lanka in May and then a 2-1 loss in the one-day series in England in June.

But during the England tour he wrote the International Cricket Council that match fixing is still problematic in international cricket and was reprimanded by the PCB.

"Speaking truth in Pakistan cricket is a sin," Latif said, adding that he regretted coming out of retirement, saying he was only used as a tool in the rebuilding process.

He was suspended for five one-day matches on claiming an unfair catch in the Multan Test against Bangladesh two months ago which followed his resignation from the captaincy.

He was left out of the team which faces New Zealand in a five-match one-day series next week.



England's Paul Collingwood bats as Richard Johnson bowls during a practice session at Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. England and Sri Lanka meet in the third and final one-day international today.

**Blair hails**

team can be proud of their performance, their spirit and above all their character," said Blair.

"It was a victory they worked for and the whole country can be proud of them," he added.

**CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer**

**ACROSS**

28 Senescence  
30 Free (of)  
33 Play-goddess  
7 Mrs. Zeus  
8 Old Turkish ruler  
10 Pediatrician's diagnosis  
11 Actress Andress  
13 Firmament  
16 Sinbad's bird  
17 Lauder of cosmetics  
18 Aachen article  
19 Doggie-bag fill  
20 Highland hillside  
21 Hide away  
23 Curriculum component  
25 Wharf  
26 Mine  
27 — glance

**DOWN**

1 Memento of the past  
2 Rocker before Clapton  
3 Angels in the theater  
4 Country singer  
5 Actor Steve Davis  
6 Close  
7 Santa's reaction  
8 Football plays  
9 Changes  
10 "Bad Moon Rising" band, initially  
12 Jennifer Garner series  
14 BK.  
25 Apartment  
26 Ancient Brits  
28 Viper type  
29 Deceptiveness  
30 Perch  
31 "— It Romantic?"  
32 "Partridge Family" cast member  
34 Dangling site  
35 Sandwich treat

**Solution time: 21 mins.**

STAG ONE HALL  
LURE BAY FLOE  
ANTH OVE RPLASS  
PASKKEY UPREIT  
HIS DDE  
SCRAM KEYNOTE  
TOU DIB WOND  
NOTE PADD FLEND  
VAN LLEO  
ELLIGHT PADI LOCK  
LOUGHREO EVIAN  
KLEB AWL RAGE  
SASS USE SLEW

**CRYPTOQUIP**

E U D N Y K Q H L K A S D Z T K  
S H X G E H T X I I T Y E L O O ;  
T O U A W Y W O L G O Y K M H T O  
L O Y K A " Q D Z E D T Y M H N Q ! "

**Yesterday's Cryptquip: I OWN HOUSES IN BOTH NEW YORK CITY AND ORLANDO, BUT I CAN'T FIND THE FLORIDA KEYS.**

Today's Cryptquip Clue: Q equals B

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.

**Jonny breaks Wallabies'**

but missed an opportunity to extend the lead when a drop-goal effort drifted wide.

England should have crossed for their first score early in the second quarter but lock Ben Kay fumbled and a certain try went begging.

Australia had got off to a dream start after only six minutes, a bold decision to kick for touch instead of taking a penalty rewarded by a try for wing Lote Tuqiri.

A beautifully weighted hanging cross kick from flyhalf Stephen Larkham caused panic in the England defence and Tuqiri raced up the touchline to outump Robinson superbly and dot down.

England regrouped quickly and got their first points on the board shortly afterwards however, when Flatley conceded a penalty for coming off his feet at a ruck. Wilkinson slotted the 45-metre kick with typical precision.

Slowly England managed to generate some fluency, with Matt Dawson sniping around the fringes of the breakdown and linking well with his back-row.

Wilkinson punished a late tackle by Larkham on wing Ben Cohen with his second penalty to put England 6-5 up,

on the left before feeding to Wilkinson. Wilkinson jinked brilliantly and found Robinson steaming up on the outside for a wonderful score in the corner.

Wilkinson missed the conversion but with a 14-5 half-time lead, England went in at the break firmly in control.

Yet their composure deserted them in a frenetic second half, as a series of handling errors frustrated their attempts to drive home their advantage.

Despite Australia's line-out breaking down -- with three successive throws pilfered by England -- the Wallabies were somehow able to stay in touch.

Australia cut the gap to six points with Flatley's first penalty.

Try as England might though they could not make their forward superiority pay and Australia moved to 14-11 when Flatley notched his penalty after Vickery foolishly handled in the ruck.

Handling errors infected England's play. Tindall, Greenwood and Cohen were all guilty of fumbles in the face of frenzied defence by Australia with George Smith spoiling brilliantly.

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