

Pakistan's match with Middlesex in doubt

AFP, London

Pakistan's one-day match against Middlesex on Thursday has been thrown into doubt following the fallout over the tourists' fourth Test forfeiture against England.

The players could opt to skip the match to support captain Inzamamul Haq in his International Cricket Council (ICC) disciplinary hearing in London on Friday.

And there are fears the whole one-day series against England could be in danger if Inzamam is banned.

They are scheduled to net at Lord's on Wednesday ahead of the 50-over contest at Uxbridge the following day but it is off-field events which are dominating their thoughts.

Pakistan tour manager Zaheer Abbas insisted the fixture was still on, saying: "There is an itinerary in front of us so at the moment we will be playing."

"We have had discussions on the matter but we have not reached any conclusions yet."

Inzamam faces an International Cricket Council (ICC) disciplinary hearing in London on Friday for his part in the events that saw Pakistan forfeit the fourth Test against England at The Oval on Sunday - the first time this had happened in the 129-year-history of Test cricket - after they'd been found guilty of ball-tampering.

Ronaldinho

FROM PAGE 20

'Barca played well and there were some moments of spectacular football,' said Rijkaard. 'But it was only one game and we have to keep working hard. I'm very pleased that Barca made such a good impression, though.'

Barca will have a chance to add a second trophy to their collection when they play UEFA Cup winners Sevilla for the European Super Cup in Monaco on Friday.

Lugano signs

FROM PAGE 20

Capped ten times, Lugano said: "I will do my best to please the fans. I'm very happy to come to Turkey." Lugano joined Sao Paulo in 2003 and helped the club to success in the Copa Libertadores and FIFA Club World Championship. He is expected to wear the No35 shirt for Fenerbahce, who trail FC Dynamo Kyiv 3-1 going into tomorrow's home leg of their UEFA Champions League third qualifying round tie.

Larporta set

FROM PAGE 20

However, none of the pre-candidates were able to raise the necessary number of signatures needed to stand and leading rivals Jaume Guixà and Jordi Medina said on Monday that they would withdraw from the race.

With Laporta reported to have exceeded the requirements with ease, the 44-year-old lawyer will now continue as president until 2010.

The club is expected to confirm him in his post later this week.

Laporta took charge of Barcelona in 2003 on the back of a pledge to sign England midfielder David Beckham when he took power.

The move failed to materialise as Beckham opted to join arch-rivals Real Madrid and instead the Catalans signed Ronaldinho from Paris St Germain.

The Brazilian forward acted as the catalyst for the revival of the club and has since steered them to two league titles and victory in the Champions League.

Fans offer

FROM PAGE 20

worsens and he is unable to return to coaching the squad next month.

Despite the positive local response, Reidl - who uses a dialysis machine three times a week - is yet to find a suitable match for the transplant, as most donors were of a different weight and blood type.

But he insists he is not concerned about losing his job or finding a donor.

"I really hope they can find a match for me, but if I worry, it won't help," he said.

"The Vietnamese football authorities say they will support me and I have assured them I will not be away longer than one month."

"I've told them this will not affect the team."

Thich Dong Phap, a 32-year-old Buddhist monk from the northern Vietnamese province Phu Tho, told the Vietnam News Agency he wished to donate a kidney so he and Riedl would have good karma.

Riedl is in his third stint as Vietnam's coach since 1998 having previously been fired for speaking out against the Communist country's state-run soccer federation.

The former Austria Vienna, FC Metz and Standard Liege striker took Vietnam to silver medals in the 1999 and 2003 Southeast Asian Games.

Vietnam is co-hosting next year's Asian Cup with Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia.



Ana Ivanovic of Serbia lifts the Rogers Cup trophy after defeating Martina Hingis of Switzerland at the final in Montreal on Monday.

Ivanovic ends Hingis run



AP, Montreal

Ana Ivanovic overpowered Martina Hingis for a 6-2, 6-3 victory in the rain-delayed final of the 1.34-million-dollar Rogers Cup on Monday.

Ivanovic posted her second career tournament victory and her first in a Tier-1 event, one level below the grand slams.

"This is a big step for me," Ivanovic said. "She's a great player. In juniors, I watched her winning grand slam titles and now I played against her and played good tennis. Basically, now I can consider myself one of the top players and that gives me motivation to work even harder to stay at this level."

The 18-year-old Serb's power shots proved to be too much for the 25-year-old Hingis, as Ivanovic

rocketed forehands down the lines that left the Swiss veteran helpless.

Ivanovic won 196,900 dollars, while Hingis earned 99,850 dollars.

The match was postponed on Sunday due to rain, but a mostly pro-Hingis crowd of about 8,000 lured by discounted tickets turned out in sunny weather on Monday afternoon.

In the semifinals, Hingis was able to counter Svetlana Kuznetsova's big shots with clever drops and slices, but that didn't work against Ivanovic, who did not appear intimidated by playing one of the sport's biggest names.

"There were times I felt there wasn't much I could do," Hingis said. "Kuznetsova would make a return error or an error in a rally, but I wasn't able to push Ivanovic to get nervous or anything to start making errors."

The seventh-seeded Hingis, a dominant player in the late 1990s,

is on a comeback from a three-year absence with foot and ankle injuries. Her performance this week will put her back in the top 10 in the world rankings for the first time in almost three years.

Hingis won the Rogers Cup in 1999 and 2000.

The 13th-seeded Ivanovic, who will move up to the No. 17 ranking this week, remains unbeaten in two visits to the Rogers Cup at 7-0. Last year in Toronto, she withdrew before a scheduled third-round meeting with Kim Clijsters with an injury.

In the doubles final, Martina Navratilova of the United States and Nadia Petrova of Russia romped 6-1, 6-2 over Cara Black of Zimbabwe and Anna-Lena Groenefeld of Germany. Tennis legend Navratilova, 49, is to retire after the Aug. 28-Sept. 10 U.S. Open.

Pak press warn ICC



AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani newspapers Tuesday warned world cricket chiefs to produce conclusive evidence before punishing captain Inzamamul Haq or risk throwing the game into crisis.

Editorials once again blamed Australian umpire Darrell Hair for the farcical end of the fourth Test against England but they increasingly criticised the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The Daily Times said in a piece headlined "Cricket doomed by a 'Hairy' incident" that if the ICC finds the master batsman guilty at a hearing on Friday and punishes him "then all hell will break loose."

"If that is what the ICC wants, to bite the hand that feeds it, then it will

be a sorry day for cricket," it added.

Inzamam's side refused to take the field after Hair awarded England five runs and ordered the ball to be changed on Sunday at the Oval. Pakistan were then judged to have forfeited the game after initially failing to return to the field in protest, following the tea interval.

The ICC announced Monday that Inzamam had been charged with ball-tampering and bringing the game into disrepute. If found guilty of the disrepute charge, he could be banned for the entire upcoming one-day series against England.

The conservative Dawn newspaper opined that Inzamam was not at fault but that umpire Hair's "ego" and innate bias, many will say - brought the game into disrepute.

It said: "If the ICC supports Hair and further penalises Pakistan, which is highly likely, it must provide incriminating footage that ball

tampering did indeed occur. If none is forthcoming, it has to be ensured that the Oval Test was Darrell Hair's last as an umpire."

The News called for Hair and fellow umpire Billy Doctrove to produce specific evidence of the "very serious" allegations.

It too criticised the sport's governing body for bringing the charges against Inzamam, saying: "The timing is ludicrous given that what was needed was some action to lower the tension and emotions."

The Nation said the ICC had to face "harsh realities".

"Can it afford to leave the game to the whims and biases of mini-Hitlers like Mr Hair?" it asked.

"Is it just because the ICC's chief executive is a fellow Australian that Mr Hair gets away with murder, despite being complained against by three South Asian boards over the last decade?"

Clear me or the tour

FROM PAGE 17

for the entire one-day series.

But it is the ostensibly lesser charge of ball-tampering, carrying with it the stigma of cheating, that threatens to derail the tour.

"We will wait for the decision and then make up our minds but it would be difficult for the players to play on if we are labelled cheats," Inzamam told Britain's Daily Express newspaper.

Inzamam apologised to spectators deprived of more than a day's cricket at The Oval but said: "The issue of being labelled cheats, though, was too important to let lie."

Australian umpire Darrell Hair, standing with West Indies' Billy Doctrove, angered Pakistan when, at the end of the 56th over of England's second innings, he signalled the award of five penalty runs

to the hosts.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Shaharyar Khan said that for his side, who'd worked hard to overcome the fallout from previous ball-tampering accusations, the current situation was "a slur on the reputation of the Pakistan team and a slur on Pakistan itself".

Both Shaharyar and Inzamam called on the ICC to prevent the 53-year-old Hair, a veteran of 76 Tests, from ever standing in one of their matches again.

Inzamam added: "Since I took over as Pakistan captain three years ago there have been no issues with ball tampering - except when Darrell Hair has been umpiring."

He said he had had no warning of Sunday's controversial decision.

missed a chance to take the field after tea when the umpires came out, a move that cost them plenty of sympathy from neutrals.

"We didn't want to play on under the cloud of being called cheats," Inzamam said. "I asked the boys if they had done anything wrong and they all said no."

And Inzamam was adamant that at no stage while they were conducting their protests did anyone tell Pakistan they risked losing the match.

Shaharyar insisted Pakistan were not "dictating to the ICC" over who could stand in their games, but he called for an independent inquiry into both the forfeit and Pakistan's alleged ball-tampering, having slammed the umpires for their "intransigence" and saying Hair had "trained his guns" on the team.

Gilchrist out, McGrath in for tri-series

AFP, Sydney

Australia will rest wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist for next month's one-day series against India and the West Indies in Malaysia, but will welcome paceman Glenn McGrath's return to international cricket.

Gilchrist was omitted from an 18-man squad named Tuesday for the tri-nations tournament in Kuala Lumpur from September 12-24, with selectors saying they wanted the 34-year-old fresh for a busy international calendar.

SQUAD

Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Hussey, Nathan Bracken, Andrew Symonds, Mark Cosgrove, Daniel Cullen, Stuart Clark, Michael Clarke, Brad Haddin, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hogg, Phil Jaques, Mitchell Johnson, Simon Katich, Brett Lee, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Shane Watson.

Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 17

7-11, 6-11, 4-11 and 9-11. Mahbub faces second-seed Soumyadeep Roy of India in the last eight.

Earlier, in the men's doubles on Monday, the two Billah brothers knocked out Bhutanese pair in straight sets before bowling down to Indian pair of Soumyadeep and Sharath Kamal 8-11, 5-11 and 12-14.

Also on Monday, Mahbub and Mousmia Romy were eliminated by Indian pair (0-3) after making their way into the mixed doubles quarterfinals with a 3-0 win over Bhutan. Mostafa and Saleha lost to Sri Lankan pair in the first round.

In women's doubles, Romy and Saleha failed to go past the first round after losing 0-3 to the Nepalese duo.

Hockey resumes

FROM PAGE 17

The teams are Wari, Dhaka Wanderers, Farashganj, Mukta Bihanga, Bachelor SC, Shishu Kishore Sangha, Victoria, Combined SC, Police SC and Uttara Hockey Club.

On completion of the 1st Division League, the Club Cup Hockey Competition will begin on September 16 before the 10-team Premier Division Hockey League starts on September 28.

The first phase matches of the Premier League will also be held on a single league basis with the top five teams later playing in the final round of the League.

Green Delta Insurance continued their support as they renewed their contract with the BHF to sponsor the league for next three seasons by providing Tk 20 lakhs.

In connection with the league, a press conference was held at the federation conference room yesterday where its general secretary Shamsul Bari and executive director of Green Delta Insurance Nazim Tajik Chowdhury spoke on the occasion.

Fletcher

FROM PAGE 17

however, it would explain Darrell Hair's sudden interest in the state of the ball on Sunday afternoon.

The report goes on to state that England's players were concerned on Saturday and notes that Marcus Trescothick was "spotted watching Pakistan's players through binoculars, presumably to ascertain what actions they were performing on the ball".

It added that Fletcher had also made enquiries as to why Sky TV cameras were not following the ball more closely as it was passed around the Pakistan fielders during the Headingly Test.

If it turns out that Fletcher did make an approach to Procter about the ball then the good relations between the two sides, which have been maintained despite the row at The Oval, will almost certainly nose-dive, adding to the possibility that the one-day series might become another casualty of the row.

"Darrell Hair has to prove that the ball was tampered with, and unless he proves that, I think his job should be on the line," he told the broadcaster.

It's now

FROM PAGE 17

switched to breaststroke from freestyle in 2000 and now holds the national 50m title.

Niaz Ali, who has won two bronze medals this time, will accompany him in the event while Shahjahan also gets into action later in the day in the men's 4x100m medley relay -- another medal prospect.

BANGLADESH TODAY'S GAMES

SWIMMING (men's): Kamal Hossain (200m freestyle), Shahjahan Al Rony, Niaz Ali (50m breaststroke), Rubel Rana (50m backstroke), 4x100m medley relay and (women's) Sabura Khatun (200m freestyle), 4x100m medley relay.

HOCKEY: Bangladesh v India

VOLLEYBALL: Bangladesh v Afghanistan

SQUASH: Bangladesh v Nepal (men's team event)

OTHERS: Archery, boxing, karate, table tennis.

ODI series hangs in the balance



AFP, London

Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer has warned the side could refuse to play in the upcoming one-day series against England if skipper Inzamamul Haq receives a lengthy ban as a result of the tourists' controversial fourth Test forfeit here at The Oval.

"I would think that the one-day tournament may be in jeopardy if he is found guilty and suspended for eight games," Woolmer said Monday.

"If the punishment was suspended then it might go ahead," the former England all-rounder also told Channel Four news.

"After what has happened the players are right behind their captain."

"I'm not a betting man but there will be more problems if he is found guilty," he added even though his side risked being fined in excess of one million pounds and a suspension from the International Cricket Council (ICC) for not taking part in scheduled fixtures.

Pakistan face England in a Twenty20 international on Monday at Bristol.

The first of five one-day internationals is then meant to take place at Cardiff on Wednesday.

Pakistan were stunned by the decision of the on-field umpires, led by Australia's Darrell Hair, to award five penalty runs to England because of ball-tampering on the fourth day of the fourth and final Test here Sunday.

So incensed were the tourists they twice refused to take the field after tea, with the umpires interpreting their action as a forfeiture of the match - the first in the 129-year-history of Test cricket - and a victory for England.

Ever since then Pakistan have been keen to stress their good relations with England and on Monday the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Shaharyar Khan, said he wanted the tour to go ahead.

However, asked if a heavy punishment for Inzamam might change the situation, he replied: "We'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

Under ICC rules the captain is held responsible for the conduct of his team.

That has led Inzamam to be charged with altering the condition of the ball and with bringing cricket into disrepute for his part in keeping the side in the dressing room when they should have been out in the middle.

If Inzamam is found guilty of ball-tampering he faces a fine of between 50 and 100 per cent of his match fee and/or a one Test or two one-day international (ODI) ban.

And he faces a ban of between two and four Test matches or four to eight ODI matches if the disrepute charge goes against him.

The star batsman's punishments, if any, will be decided at a hearing in London on Friday chaired by chief ICC match referee Ranjan Madugalle.

Woolmer said that the players had been on the point of going back onto the pitch after staging a mini protest following tea.

"We didn't know the game was being called off," said Woolmer, formerly in charge of South Africa.

"We were in discussions with Inzamam to persuade them to go back onto the field. It was too late by the time that they went back out as Darrell Hair had gone off."

Hair, 53, upset Pakistan with some contentious decisions during their 2-0 Test series win over England late last year.

"We at the PCB would not want

to see Mr Darrell Hair appointed to any Pakistan match in the future," Shaharyar told a London news conference on Monday.

"We have had problems with Mr Hair, the team has lost confidence in him and they feel deeply offended by his attitude towards the Pakistan team."

He added Pakistan had worked hard to remove the stigma of previous ball-tampering allegations but Hair had "trained his guns at the team".

Shaharyar's comments were positively mild compared to those of former Pakistan captain Imran Khan.

The legendary all-rounder said: "Hair is one of those characters, when he wears the white umpire's coat, he metamorphoses into a mini Hitler."

Inzamam meanwhile asked: "Why does everything happen against us from the end that Darrell Hair is umpiring?"

"The pride of the nation has been hurt, we have been unfairly labelled as cheats."

Shaharyar, who insisted he'd be happy for the offending ball to be placed on public display, said Pakistan were compiling evidence to support their case that they've done nothing wrong.

"No-one has indicated any scuffing - any photographic or television view - and this matter has not been raised with us," Shaharyar, who added the whole issue of ball-tampering should be removed from the jurisdiction of the on-field umpires, said.

"We are gathering a great deal of evidence and will make it available to the ICC."

Hair must prove or lose job: Imran



AFP, London

Umpire Darrell Hair 'has to prove' that Pakistani players tampered with the ball in the chaos-hit fourth Test against England or risk losing his job, Pakistani cricket legend Imran Khan told the BBC on Monday.

Khan, who captained Pakistan to a World Cup final triumph over England in 1992, said there should be an independent investigation into whether ball tampering occurred or not, an allegation he described as "very serious".

"Darrell Hair has to prove that the ball was tampered with, and unless he proves that, I think his job should be on the line," he told the broadcaster.

Hair, who Khan earlier described as a "mini Hitler", penalised Pakistan five runs on the fourth day of the final Test at The Oval on Sunday over ball-tampering allegations.

The tourists' captain, Inzamamul Haq, decided to keep his team off the field following the decision,

leading experienced Australia official Hair, and junior West Indian colleague Billy Doctrove, to conclude that Pakistan had refused to

from Inzamam, saying he "would have protested there, I would have called the manager out and I would have played under protest."

Elaborating on his comparison of Hair to Adolf Hitler, the former all-rounder said that when he was a player, "there were some umpires who, the moment they put on the white coat, sort of thought they were these dictators and wanted to stamp their authority on the cricket field."

"That's not how umpiring is supposed to be done."

Responding to questions over whether he had ever tampered with the ball, Imran, who spent much of his career playing for English county Sussex, said: "Ball tampering has been part of the game ever since the game was played."

On the same programme, Pakistan coach Bob Woolmer, the former England all-rounder, reiterated his earlier comments that the tourists' tour of England may come to an end if Inzamam is found guilty of ball tampering in a hearing on Friday with the International Cricket Council (ICC), the sport's ruling body.



IMRAN KHAN

Waugh twins sides with Hair



AFP, Sydney

Former Australia captains Steve Waugh and Mark Taylor defended umpire Darrell Hair's integrity in the wake of the Pakistan forfeit row Tuesday, as local media dubbed him "the bravest man in cricket".

Waugh said the Australian official correctly awarded the fourth Test to England Sunday after Pakistan refused to come out after tea in protest at allegations of ball-tampering.

"I definitely agree with that, if they don't go back on the field the Test is over," Waugh told Sydney's Daily Telegraph newspaper, adding: "No one's bigger than the game."

The 168-Test veteran said Hair could be "stubborn and a bit hard-nosed" but he would not have made a serious charge of ball tampering against Pakistan without good reason.

Hair was at the centre of a storm when he no-balled Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralidaran for chucking at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1995, and Waugh said the umpire would not have taken his latest actions lightly.

"He always stands by what he believes so you can't ask for much more from an umpire," he said.

Waugh's predecessor as Australian Test captain Mark Taylor rejected claims Hair was biased against South Asian teams.

"I'm sure he's just doing what he thinks is right," Taylor told Channel Nine television.

Former Australian Cricket Board chief executive Graham Halbish said the way Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq was now treated represented a "litmus test" for the International Cricket Council's (ICC) ability to govern the game.

"You have a choice to be fair and firm with your discipline, or you let things go a bit," he said. "As soon as you start letting things go a bit, licence is taken, and the game and the sport can potentially get right out of hand."