

Bird expects law changes

BBC ONLINE, Undated
Former umpire Dickie Bird believes the Inzamamul Haq affair will bring about a change in the laws on ball-tampering.

Currently an umpire can impose an on-the-spot penalty if he believes a ball has been unfairly altered. But Pakistan captain Inzamam was subsequently found not guilty because of insufficient evidence.

"Unless you see them actually tampering with the cricket ball I don't think there's a lot you can do about it," Bird told BBC News 24. "I would bring that into that law. I wouldn't say you could do what you want with a cricket ball -- you could use a razor blade, a bottle top or anything then and that would be unfair."

ICC chief referee Ranjan Madugalle on Wednesday made the not-guilty judgement on the charge laid against Inzamam during last month's fourth Test against England.

At a subsequent news conference he was asked whether the law is now completely unenforceable without unambiguous video evidence.

He replied: "At this moment I don't know whether I can really answer in a concrete fashion."

"My hunch is you need to have concrete evidence to substantiate serious allegations, definite proof."

Umpire Darrell Hair, who penalised Pakistan five runs at The Oval, provoking an international outcry, refused to comment on whether Law 42 was workable.

Walter Hadlee passes away

AFF, Wellington

Former New Zealand cricket captain Walter Hadlee, the father of bowling great Sir Richard Hadlee and two other Test players, died on Friday aged 91.

Hadlee, who passed away in Christchurch after suffering a stroke, played 11 Tests for his country between 1937 and 1951 in a career interrupted by World War II. He was a popular captain with a keen strategic sense in an era when New Zealand had yet to win a Test.

The tall, bespectacled batsman Hadlee played 19 innings, scoring 543 runs at an average of 30.16. He was never dismissed for single figures, although he scored only one Test century.

His career peaked with the 1949 away series against England when New Zealand under his captaincy drew all four Tests with a lineup which included batting stars Bert Sutcliffe and Martin Donnelly, and all-rounder John Reid.

Mido taunts

FROM PAGE 20 months on loan from Roma, added: "I came back to Tottenham because I know I can score goals but I have only been here for four games."

Mido did give Campbell problems when he went head-to-head with him in the north London derby match last October but the defender was struggling at the time with his form and with personal problems that were to result in him walking out on his team at half-time in February.

He decided to leave Arsenal in July and the move to Portsmouth has rejuvenated him to the extent that Mido may well come to regret his diplomatic outburst.

Uncapped trio

FROM PAGE 20 Christoph Metzelder, Sebastian Kehl, Jens Nowotny, Robert Huth and Sebastian Deisler were also ruled out because of long standing injury problems.

Loew stepped up from the assistant's role to replace Juergen Klinsmann following Germany's third place finish at the World Cup in Germany.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Robert Enke (Hanover 96), Timo Hildebrand (VfB Stuttgart), Jens Lehmann (Arsenal, England)

Defenders: Malik Fathi (Hertha Berlin), Arne Friedrich (Hertha Berlin), Manuel Friedrich (Mainz), Clemens Fritz (Werder Bremen), Marcell Jansen (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Philipp Lahm (Bayern Munich), Alexander Madlung (VfL Wolfsburg)

Midfielders: Michael Ballack (Chelsea, England), Torsten Frings (Werder Bremen), Thomas Hitzlsperger (VfB Stuttgart), David Odonkor (Real Betis, Spain), Bernd Schneider (Bayer Leverkusen), Bastian Schweinsteiger (Bayern Munich), Piotr Trochowski (Hamburg SV)

Forwards: Mike Hanke (VfL Wolfsburg), Miroslav Klose (Werder Bremen), Oliver Neuvill (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Lukas Podolski (Bayern Munich), Jan Schlaudraff (Alemannia Aachen)



Argentina players celebrate after their second goal against Japan during their group match at the Women's Hockey World Cup in Madrid on Thursday.

Australia on top

AFF, Madrid

Striker Nikki Hudson set up Australia's second win in the women's World Cup field hockey tournament here on Thursday with a 3-1 victory over the United States.

The win puts Australia top of Pool B after two rounds ahead of defending champions Argentina on goal difference after the South Americans defeated Japan 3-2.

South Korea earlier missed a great chance to lead the group when they drew 0-0 against South Africa.

In a high tempo game, Australia scored early after Hudson hammered a corner rebound towards goal and Sarah Taylor deflected the ball past USA 'keeper Barbara Weinberg.

The United States pressured Australia's midfield into passing errors and they equalized in the 11th minute when Kelly Doton hammered in a corner shot.

Hudson then scored a brilliant goal from a diving tomahawk' shot

just before half time.

The United States almost equalized after the break when Sarah Dawson just failed to lift the ball into the net after a scrimmage in front of goal.

Australia started to dominate possession and Angie Skirving put them further ahead with a corner goal with 13 minutes remaining.

Australia coach Frank Murray praised his team's improvement.

"The new team members had their first match yesterday and they settled better today. We had seen the USA play in lead up games and we knew how they could play. We are very pleased with a 3-1 win."

United States coach Lee Bodimeade admitted: "We were outplayed by a better team today. We set out a game plan we thought was going to bring us success but we didn't carry it through as the match progressed and if you are not there for the whole game you pay the consequences."

Argentina, meanwhile, had a great start to their game with two clever goals from corner set moves that totally deceived the defenders. Raszario Luchetti deflected the

first goal into the net from the right and then Agustina Garcia scored down the left side after a neat pass from Luciana Aymar.

After the break Argentina used a third corner variation for Mercedes Margalot to shoot the ball into the top of the net.

In the final minute Japan's Rika Kozakawa scored a brilliant goal followed immediately by a corner rebound goal from Chie Kimura.

The two late goals denied Argentina top place in Pool B. Meanwhile, Jen Wilson, playing her 100th match for South Africa was inspirational as her team held South Korea to a goalless draw.

The Asians faded in the hot conditions and had to be content with a stalemate after their 2-1 win against Japan on Wednesday.

South Africa coach Jenny King was pleased with their first point after their 1-0 loss against Australia.

"I'm pleased with our first point in the event although no goals in two games is a concern," said King. "Our defence today was outstanding but we gave the ball away too easily."

O'Neill faces Mourinho test

FROM PAGE 20 admitted O'Neill.

Mourinho has seen his side quietly put together a six-match winning run which has left them top of the table and with maximum points in their Champions League group.

But the perfectionist Portuguese believes there is still room for improvement as he seeks to find the best formula for integrating Michael Ballack and Andriy Shevchenko to his side.

"We've still got some work to do," he said, while insisting that Shevchenko, who is without a goal in six matches, will remain in the side until he finds his finishing form.

Peter Crouch was the toast of Anfield in midweek but the England star could be straight back to the bench when Liverpool take on Bolton on Saturday in the pick of the weekend's Premiership clashes.

Liverpool boss Rafael Benitez has not named an unchanged side for the last 93 games and Crouch admitted: "Although I scored two goals against Galatasaray there is no telling whether I will be playing in the next game."

Crouch's goals against the Turks, the second an acrobatic scissor kick, have thrown down the gauntlet to Dirk Kuyt and Craig Bellamy, who had

looked to be establishing themselves as Benitez's first-choice strike pairing.

An early kick-off at the Reebok Stadium means a win could lift Liverpool - temporarily at least - into the top four for the first time this season.

But Bolton are notoriously difficult opponents on their home turf and appear to have weathered the storm over allegations that manager Sam Allardyce received kickbacks, or bungs, from transfer dealings.

A 1-0 win over high-flying Portsmouth on Monday lifted Allardyce's side above Liverpool and into sixth in the table.

"After all that has gone on, that win meant a lot to me and now we have to crack on and build on it," Allardyce said.

Arsene Wenger will begin a new decade in charge of Arsenal by seeking to extend his side's winning run to five matches at the expense of Charlton, who are looking like relegation candidates after losing five of their six Premiership matches under new boss Iain Dowie.

Manchester United are not in action until Sunday, when Newcastle visit Old Trafford.

Dogfight at the top

FROM PAGE 20 season) we beat Atletico in this fixture and it was crucial in us going on to win the league," reflected Real coach Fabio Capello on Thursday.

"But every year is different and Atletico are a dangerous team, especially away from home," added the Italian.

The big talking point among Real fans is whether David Beckham will be on the bench again, with the former England captain having been among the substitutes for Real's last three games.

Capello last week gave Beckham a ringing endorsement but the outstanding form of Jose Antonio Reyes down the right flank could continue to keep him out of Real's starting lineup.

Atletico are fifth after victories in both their away games this season but their coach Javier Aguirre will have to work hard if they are to win in the Santiago

Bernabeu stadium for the first time in seven seasons.

"We have to have a perfect game if we are to win, and I don't understand why Capello or (Real club captain) Raul are being criticised," said Aguirre, leaping to the defence of his opposite number on Thursday.

"Real are top of the league, playing well and have only conceded one goal in the league but the criticism continues," added Aguirre.

Valencia lie third, unbeaten both in domestic and continental competition, and entertain newly-promoted Gimmastic Tarragona on Sunday. "There are going to be tough times this season when things are more difficult. There always are over the course of a year but we want to make sure they don't start against Gimmastic," said Valencia captain David Albelda on Thursday, trying to keep his team's feet on the ground.

Gesture ignited forfeit

PTI, London

Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq had made a gesture to upset umpire Darrell Hair which resulted in his walking out of a meeting to explore ways to rescue the fourth Test against England on the fourth day at The Oval.

The meeting had been convened by the match referee Mike Procter to rescue the match and reduce the damaging impact of one of the biggest controversies in the history of Test cricket.

"Hair was incensed by a gesture made towards him by the Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq. It is believed that attempts were made to persuade Hair to stay, but he departed with the words: 'I am leaving and he knows why,' indicating Inzamam," according to a report in the English daily 'The Independent'.

The meeting took place despite the fact that the umpires had awarded the match to England after Pakistan had failed to meet their deadline to return to the field protesting charges of ball tampering for which Hair and Doctrove deducted five penalty runs from their score.

But play could have been resumed the following day if a solution was found acceptable to both sides.

The report said that when various possible solutions were explored, Inzamam said he had not been given a chance to speak to the umpires and Hair had labelled his side as cheats.

"Inzamam then made a waving gesture to which Hair took great exception and walked out. One explanation is that the Australian umpire felt the gesture was insulting to anyone who knew anything about Pakistani culture."

"The meeting had been going on for about 15 minutes at that point and it became clear to everyone left that there was no point in continuing in Hair's absence."

WC officials warn of invalid tickets

BBC ONLINE, undated

World Cup officials have warned people buying tickets from internet auction sites that they will not be valid for the event in the Caribbean in March.

It is thought several hundred of the estimated 800,000 officials tickets have been offered for sale online, some for more than twice the face value.

Only tickets from authorised travel agents and the ICC's official public ticketing programme will be accepted.

"We're trying to protect people," commercial manager Stephen Price said.

Talks are continuing between World Cup officials, leading auction site eBay and other internet monitoring services to identify the ticket sellers.

A package of four tickets for matches in Barbados with a face value of US \$900 had attracted bids over US\$1,900 with a day left in the bidding.

"People are selling tickets they haven't even received yet," Price added.

Lampard

FROM PAGE 20 "But as long as he keeps working the goal will come and, once one comes, they will all come. We know that."

"We're a confident team and we're getting better. We're strong, we're creating chances."

Younis to lead

FROM PAGE 17 loss for the elite tournament, which starts early next month.

"Inzamam is our key player but we will take this as a challenge and the team will try its level best to win the Champions Trophy, which is the second biggest event after the World Cup," Younis told AFP.

The stylish 28-year-old batsman has led Pakistan in two Tests and two one-day internationals, winning and losing one each in both forms of the game.

"It's a great challenge and honour to lead the country, and this current team is a well-knit side," he said. "If we play to our potential, we can do well."

Football

FROM PAGE 17 Fulbari Nabojagorani Club, Adar Udayan Jubo Sangha, Mohalanpara New Jubo Sangha, Anantapara New Jubo Sangha, Sahapur Jubo Sangha, Abik Basantapur, Kalikantor, Badhair Mission Sporting Club, Ramnagar Shapla Jubo Sangha, Laldighipara, Joyvishnapur Rabi Sashi Sangha, Panchgachhia Sandhyatara Sangha, Sundarpur Shapla Sangha and Aastapukur Piplika Jubo Sangha.

Howard prefers cricket to opera

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Prime Minister John Howard has admitted he would rather spend a day at the cricket than a night at the opera, but says that does not make him a philistine.

Labor's arts spokesman Peter Garrett has branded senior Federal Government ministers "philistines", whose obsession with sport comes at the expense of the nation's art and culture.

Garrett acknowledged Howard was a "cricket tragic" but asked if anyone could remember the last time he made a speech about the arts.

Howard offered to send Garrett a copy of his most recent speech to the Business Arts Movement, and said liking sport did not mean he was against the arts.

"I think it's a great pity, there's this sort of petty complaint saying 'When did you last go to the opera,

when did you last see a stage play and when did you last listen to a piece of classical music?'" Howard told Southern Cross Broadcasting. "Well, the truth is there's room in Australia for all of these things and we ought to be over the moon about the success of our artists."

The government will spend \$652 million on the arts this financial year, compared with \$250 million on sport, he said.

"Some people in the artistic world are pretty good at complaining they're not very ready to acknowledge the financial support that is provided," Howard said.

Asked whether he would rather spend a day at the New Year's cricket Test against England or a night at the opera, Howard was clear.

"I'd rather spend the day at the New Year's Test," he said.

"But I have attended the opera quite a lot in the past, the ballet less frequently but nonetheless, my wife and daughter are very keen ballet fans ... and I go periodically.

"I rather like the opera but I am unashamedly, like an Australian, very fond of sporting events, particularly Tests."

"I think it's a big mistake for people in the artistic community, because they see somebody in my position being so overtly fond of certain sports, to say 'Well, that means he's against the arts'."

He said Garrett was right to say that Australians should revel in their artistic achievements as much as their sporting achievements, but was wrong to say that the government ignored the arts.

"He misunderstands the mood and the temper of the Australian people if he thinks having a go at people being heavily interested in and involved in sport is in some way odd," Howard said.

Howard said he was delighted to see the resurgence of the Australian film industry.

But he has no plans to see the latest success, Kenny, a mockumentary about a plumber working with portable toilets.

More precious than Bush, Blair?

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

There were more than a few raised eyebrows last week when Darrell Hair told reporters that he was down to umpire in the Champions Trophy. How could such a controversial figure officiate so soon after The Oval row -- and what would happen if he ended up umpiring a Pakistan match?

Privately, the ICC was annoyed he had gone public and seemingly put them on the spot. A week ago, it said that an announcement of those appointed for the tournament was imminent. When the days went on and no such list was issued, it started to become obvious that Hair would not be travelling to India.

Cricinfo is aware that there has been considerable discussion and disagreement within the ICC in recent days over whether Hair should stand, but news that the Indian authorities had admitted they could not guarantee protection to him was all a bit sudden and convenient.

It raised two scenarios. The first was that the Indian authorities, who in the last year have had no worries keeping Pervez Musharraf, George Bush and Tony Blair safe, genuinely could not protect an umpire. That was clearly nonsense ... but if it had been true, then it would raise massive concerns about the well-being of other players, officials and spectators. Yes, heads of state are slightly different from ICC officials, but this is a global event and given that, the government as well as the board would pull out all the stops to ensure that all bases were covered.

Mirza follows Hingis

Tennis

AFF, Seoul

A day after she sent top seed Martina Hingis crashing out of the Korea Open, Sania Mirza was eliminated Friday by Spain's Virginia Ruano Pascual.

There was little to choose between the two quarterfinalists, who battled it out for two hours and 54 minutes on a warm afternoon at Seoul Olympic Park.

But Ruano Pascual finally got home 7-6, 4-6, 7-6 on day five of the 145,000-dollar event.

"Losing six in the third is always tough," the 19-year-old Indian star told reporters after the game. "There wasn't much more I could do. It was a great match, and you learn a lot from matches like this."

The first set marked the standard for the rest of the match. Mirza showed flashes of the brilliance that undid the world number eight the previous day, as well as a number of unforced errors.

Accurate groundstrokes from the powerful Spanish player kept the pair neck and neck.

Mirza received treatment for muscle cramp after the fourth and sixth games of the second set but still managed to step up a gear.

Despite letting her opponent off the hook on two occasions, she eventually took the set 6-4.

With both players tiring, neither could seize the initiative in the final set and it was little surprise when it went to a tie-break. Mirza had already survived two match points but lost the tie-break 7-3 amid a number of controversial over-rulings by the umpire.

"I met Virginia in the locker room and she said that she had never seen three over-rules in a tie-break before," said Mirza. "It does spoil the game but sometimes it goes for you and sometimes against."

7x3