

Warne puts Victoria in charge

AFP, Adelaide

Test leg-spinner Shane Warne claimed five wickets and opener Nick Jewell neared a century as Victoria took charge of their Sheffield Shield cricket match against South Australia here Sunday.

By the close of the third day, Victoria had reached 201 for four to hold an overall lead of 304 runs on a pitch that will Warne confidence of more wickets on Monday's final day.

Jewell (93 not out) attacked late in the day to ensure Victoria did not squander the gains made in the morning by Warne (5-103), who worked through his extensive repertoire in an unchanged stint.

Despite several chances, Warne was unable to dislodge former Australian team-mate Darren Lehmann, whose unbeaten 136 lifted SA to 282, 103 runs short of Victoria's 385 for six declared.

In Brisbane, Queensland must defy form, history and NSW's quality attack to pull off an outright victory at the Gabba on Monday.

A 68-run last wicket stand between spinner Beau Casson and Doug Bollinger forced Queensland to chase a last-day target of 325 runs for victory.

Only four times in the 75-year history of interstate cricket has a team scored as much to secure victory at the Gabba.

NSW eked out 308 in its second innings with only Casson (52) getting a half-century after skipper Brad Haddin, and left-handers Ed Cowan and Aaron O'Brien all fell when well set in the 40s.

Queensland was 12 without loss at Sunday's close.

Bermudans turn to yoga

AFP, Hamilton

Bermuda are turning to yoga to boost their fitness levels ahead of the 2007 World Cup.

Bermuda recruit David Hemp, recently appointed captain of Glamorgan in the English County Championship, admitted it was a new challenge for him ahead of the islanders' trip to Africa.

"It was the first time I'd ever done anything like that and it was quite interesting. I know Northants and a couple of the other sides in the county championship got into it, and it paid off for them," said Hemp of the yoga and pilates classes introduced by coach, ex-West Indies batsman Gus Logie.

"If it makes you more aware of your body and more relaxed at the wicket then it's got to help."

The Bermuda born middle-order batsman was training with the squad for the first time but believes he will have a crucial role to play when the country makes its World Cup debut.

"The fact that I've got the opportunity to captain Glamorgan and to play internationally with Bermuda has given me a new focus and a new direction in cricket," he told the Bermuda Sun newspaper.

Hemp will train with the squad for the next two weeks before they travel to Kenya and South Africa to take on the Kenyans and Holland in four-day matches as well as Kenya, Canada and Holland in seven one-day matches.

Bermuda will play in Group B at the World Cup along with India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

Del Piero

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Juventus' initial punishment for their role as the main offenders in the Italian match-fixing scandal was relegation with a 30-point penalty.

The two points dropped by Juve this season were in a 1-1 draw at Rimini on the opening day of the season.

Juventus next play on Wednesday at home to Brescia.

Three cheers

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I am delighted and happy just to be back amongst the goals again and to have secured the three points in what was a big game for us. I'm really proud and happy with the performance."

Elated United manager Sir Alex Ferguson said: "He was due to score at some point. The longer these things go for strikers, they start to doubt things. When they score their confidence goes up."

Rooney treble

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controversially disallowed for off-side.

"Looking at the monitor, it was a goal. Sometimes these things go for you, sometimes not," said Walford manager Aidy Boothroyd. "But it was another clean sheet and we are becoming hard to beat."

Henri Camara spared Wigan's blushes at Craven Cottage with an 83rd minute goal after Denny Landzaat's second-half penalty clipped the crossbar.



PHOTO: AFP

Russian starlet Maria Sharapova celebrates after beating compatriot Nadia Petrova in the Linz Open final yesterday.

Maria takes Linz title

Tennis

AFP, Linz

Maria Sharapova claimed her fifth title of the year at the Linz Open on Sunday when she beat defending champion and number two seed Nadia Petrova 7-5, 6-2 in an all-Russian final.

Sharapova added to her victories at the US Open, Indian Wells, San Diego and Zurich. By reaching the final the 19-year-old will overtake Justine Henin-Hardenne as the world number two when the rankings are announced on Monday.

Top-seeded Sharapova is also in contention, along with the Belgian and Amelie Mauresmo of France, of finishing the season at number one, a position she last held on October 23, 2005.

Despite her defeat, Petrova has shown a remarkable return to form, having lost five consecutive matches up to September's US Open after returning from a hip injury. She won in Stuttgart and reached the final in Moscow and Linz.

The match between two players ranked in the top five was by no means a classic.

Petrova failed to repeat the commanding form she had shown in reaching the final for the loss of just nine games, and Sharapova rarely had to rise above the ordinary.

Sharapova made a perfect start, breaking to lead 1-0, but the next several games featured little drama as both held serve with little trouble.

Petrova, playing with her right thigh strapped, failed to find the power on her serve that had made her such a force against other

opponents, but she finally stepped up a gear and levelled at 4-4 with a backhand volley.

She went on to earn two set points on Sharapova's serve at 5-4 but her opponent held off the threat and broke for 6-5 when Petrova double-faulted.

Petrova failed to convert two break points as Sharapova served for the set.

The world number five made a terrible start to the second set, surrendering her serve with a double-fault.

Sharapova held on to her lead, giving up just one point in the last three games as she broke at 4-2 and served out to love for the title.

2nd Afro-Asia Cup in India

REUTERS, Mohali

India will stage the second Afro-Asia Cup one-day series next June, the Asian Cricket Council announced on Sunday.

The combined Asian and African teams will play three one-day games in Chennai on June 6, 8 and 10. Two Twenty20 games will be played on June 5, one of them between the women's teams of the two continents.

The inaugural edition was in South Africa in August 2005, ending 1-1 after one game was washed out.

Seventy percent of the net proceeds will go towards developing the game in the host continent, the visiting continent will receive 20 percent with the rest going to charity.

Bravo in the clear

BBC ONLINE, undated

West Indies' Dwayne Bravo has been cleared of any wrongdoing in claiming a catch which appeared to have bounced first in the match against England.

Bravo was charged by the International Cricket Council for failing "to conduct play within the spirit of the game".

He caught Michael Yardy but television replays suggested the ball did not carry to Bravo.

Match referee Mike Procter said: "Dwayne thought he had taken it cleanly and I had no reason to disbelieve him."

The charge was laid by the four umpires on duty, on-field officials Simon Taufel and Daryl Harper, third umpire Aleem Dar and fourth official Amish Saheba.

Procter presided over the code of conduct hearing and added: "Television replays appeared to show the ball bounced but Dwayne thought he had taken the catch cleanly."

"From my experience as a player I know that can happen, but we needed to ask the question to make sure it was a genuine mistake by the player."

England won the match by three wickets and Bravo recorded his maiden one-day hundred in an unbeaten 112.

Aussies cruise

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| | | | | |
|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Mongia c Hussey b Watson | 18 | | | |
| Dravid c Clark b Lee | 52 | | | |
| Kaif b Lee | 30 | | | |
| Dhoni lbw b Bracken | 28 | | | |
| Raina c Watson b Bracken | 13 | | | |
| Pathan c Martyn b McGrath | 10 | | | |
| Harbhajan not out | 5 | | | |
| Extras: (lb-5, nb-4, w-9) | 18 | | | |
| Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs) | 249 | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-89, 3-126, 4-186, 5-197, 6-224, 7-239, 8-249 | | | | |
| Did not bat: Patel, Sreesanth | | | | |
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Lee | 10 | 1 | 54 | 2 |
| McGrath | 10 | 1 | 34 | 2 |
| Bracken | 10 | 2 | 56 | 2 |
| Johnson | 8 | 0 | 33 | 1 |
| Watson | 9 | 0 | 48 | 1 |
| Symonds | 3 | 0 | 19 | 0 |

AUSTRALIA

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|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Gilchrist c Raina b Sreesanth | 23 | | | |
| Watson lbw b Mongia | 50 | | | |
| Ponting c Tendulkar b Sreesanth | 58 | | | |
| Martyn not out | 73 | | | |
| Symonds b Pathan | 20 | | | |
| Clarke not out | 2 | | | |
| Extras: (lb-8, w-18) | 26 | | | |
| Total: (For 4 wkts in 45.4 overs) | 252 | | | |
| Did not bat: Hussey, Lee, Johnson, Bracken, McGrath. | | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-111, 3-185, 4-230. | | | | |
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Pathan | 7 | 0 | 42 | 1 |
| Patel | 8.4 | 0 | 61 | 0 |
| Sreesanth | 8 | 1 | 43 | 2 |
| Harbhajan | 10 | 0 | 49 | 0 |
| Mongia | 9 | 0 | 36 | 1 |
| Sehwag | 3 | 0 | 13 | 0 |

Result: Australia won by six wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Damien Martyn.

Toss: India.

Umpires: Billy Bowden and Steve Bucknor.

No sign

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committee recorded the statements of witnesses, accepted documents submitted by N Srinivasan, the board's treasurer, and have closed the matter, pending a final conclusion. The report of the disciplinary committee would be submitted to the board's secretary.

Selectors spring

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The former national skipper informed that they would try to find a real opening combination during the series.

"We had tried Ashraf (Mohammad) in the opening slot but it didn't clicked that's why we will not consider him as an opener in the coming series. I think the series give us the opportunity to try a new pair for the slot," he said.

Faruque said that they will announce the final team, most likely a 14-member squad, on November 18 or 19 for the first three games of the five-match series.

He also informed that they will allow the selected players to play in the semifinals and final of the Corporate Cricket League and the first two rounds of the National Cricket League which is scheduled to start from November 9.

Symonds's admission

Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australian cricketer Andrew Symonds has revealed he is on his last warning from Cricket Australia if he gets into more trouble.

Symonds, one of one-day cricket's dynamic players, was fined and suspended when he arrived for Australia's one-day international with Bangladesh in Cardiff during last year's Ashes series in England under the influence of alcohol.

Skipper Ricky Ponting later spoke of his fury at Symonds' behaviour that day and former chairman of selectors Trevor Hohns wanted the player sent home and was dismayed when instead he was fined and slapped with a two-match ban.

Symonds writes in his new book "Roy: Going for Broke" he has been told by CA chief executive James Sutherland that his Australian contract will be ripped up if he falls into trouble again.

In extracts published in Melbourne's Sunday Herald, the all-rounder tells how team-mate Michael Clarke frantically tried to revive him from his stupor on the

morning after his drunken night out during the 2005 Ashes tour.

And Symonds says it was Clarke who, again, saved him when he wanted to fight a Cheetahs rugby union player in a nightclub incident on Australia's tour of South Africa in March.

He says Clarke defused an explosive flare-up when Symonds wanted to "take it outside" from Cape Town's Hemisphere nightclub.

Symonds writes of his Ashes disgrace that he turned up at breakfast at the team hotel in Cardiff still dressed in jeans and shirt from the night before.

"Then I fell asleep and the next thing I know I'm being pinched, prodded and poked before getting drenched with water," Symonds said.

"I didn't feel the first bottle of water that 'Pup' (Clarke) poured over me. The water that finally registered was when I was standing up, albeit unsteadily, in the shower."

"Another shower didn't help and by the time the warm-up started on the field, the gig was pretty well up, especially when I slipped off the 'wheelee' bin that I was doing my stretches against."

During subsequent contract talks, Sutherland told Symonds his

international career was finished if there was any more trouble.

Sutherland ordered Symonds to "walk away" from any alcohol-fuelled dramas -- even if his team-mates were involved.

"James Sutherland was quite clear that this latest contract would be ripped up if I overstepped the mark again," Symonds said.

He admits wanting to fight a Cheetahs player in a nightclub incident in Cape Town in March and says Clarke possibly saved his career.

"I was happily chatting away to Springbok prop Ollie Le Roux when another Cheetahs player further down the bar decided to make trouble," Symonds wrote.

"There were a few hard stares exchanged, until I decided enough was enough and asked this fella whether he wanted to take it outside."

"I was on my way out when Pup zoomed in to steer me away. I owe Pup big time."

Symonds says he is reformed, and apologises to those team-mates and officials involved in the Cardiff incident.

Warne coming good

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

Shane Warne said his bowling is coming together well ahead of next month's highly anticipated Ashes cricket Test opener with England in Brisbane.

The champion leg-spinner snared 5-103 for Victoria in a Sheffield Shield match against South Australia here Sunday and is pleased to be bowling his flipper (surprise faster ball) with greater effect.

Warne said the success of his spinning variations has been a tantalising sign that he will be in perfect bowling shape for Andrew Flintoff's English tourists at the

Gabba starting on November 23. "Couple of (flippers), they came out pretty well, a couple of wrong 'uns came out good, so I'm happy, happy with the way I'm bowling," Warne said after the third day's play at Adelaide Oval.

"The figures are always nice as a reward, but I was just happy with the way I was bowling, I was getting the ball to turn and bounce."

Before the game Warne had a tune-up session with his Adelaide-based mentor Terry Jenner, seeking to iron out the kinks that were evident when he took 1-113 against Western Australia in Perth last week.

"I had a good workout with TJ (Jenner) before the game, nice to work with him on a few things like my front leg, my follow through, my arm

and all those sorts of things," said Warne, who captured 40 wickets in last year's losing Ashes series in England.

"At the moment I'm enjoying my cricket, I'm enjoying the challenges that lie ahead."

Warne said he would not be building up the Ashes into anything too overpowering, reasoning that there will be enough pressure without adding more from within.

"I think you can sometimes build things up to be too big, yes, it's a big series, but pressure is fear of failure, I'm not a big believer in pressure and all those sorts of things," he said.

"I think if you give everything you've got you'll have some good days and bad ones."

Roger moves into final

Tennis

AFP, Basel

Roger Federer squeezed through his toughest test of the week as he fought off Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 to reach the final of his home Swiss Indoors event on Saturday.

The world No. 1 had to get past a battling third-set tiebreak against Asia's best player and now faces Chile's Fernando Gonzalez in a rematch of last weekend's final in Madrid.

Down 2-4 and 3-5 in the final-set decider against the Asian powerhouse, Federer admitted: "I was thinking then that I'd always have a chance here next year."

"My thoughts are always clear and I have no illusions," said the game's dominator and master strategist. "I knew I was not in good shape at that point."

By habit, the Swiss lifted his form to survive, helped by a debatable lineal which went in his favour on Paradorn's baseline.

Paradorn was not disappointed at the end, though.

"I'm not bothered at all. This was a "good" loss, I have no negative thoughts after such a high level of tennis," said the Thai star.

"I'm coming back; I've been working hard; I've improved my fitness a lot. Every win counts for the confidence."

Federer advanced in just under two hours on his second chance after the Thai had saved a match point in the tenth game of the third set.

The world No. 1 and former Basel ballboy, who stands 86-5 in 2006, is now a victory away from an 11th title this season.

Gonzalez powered into his third indoor final this season with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over another Swiss, Stanislas Wawrinka.

The Chilean has been the ironman of the indoor season, losing finals this month against Ivan Ljubicic in Vienna and going down to Federer for the eighth time in his career last Sunday in Spain.

"Today was by far my best match of the event," said the contender for a place in next month's Masters Cup in Shanghai. "I'm tired but I'm happy."

"I have a big motivation now, but playing Federer is so difficult. You usually only have one chance against him and you have to take it."

Federer, who is keen to win his home event after losing finals here to Thomas Enqvist and Tim Henman, goes into Sunday's final with an 8-0 career lead over Gonzalez.

"Last week was a tough match at the start and I'm expecting the same

here," said Federer. "This is the first time that I've actually been a favourite in a Basel final," said the losing finalist in 2000 and 2001.

Saturday's victory also boosted Gonzalez's chances of qualifying for next month's season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai, where the last four spots in the eight-man event must be decided over the next eight days.

Gonzalez becomes the third man this season behind Federer and Rafael Nadal to enter three finals in succession on the tour.

The South American has now won 24 of 30 matches and stands ninth in the year-end chase.

All-French final

AFP, Lyon

Richard Gasquet and Marc Gicquel both survived three-set marathons Saturday to set up an all-French final at the 850,000 dollar ATP event here.

Fourth seed Gasquet, once the number one junior in the world, dropped the first set on a tie-break but came back to beat compatriot Arnaud Clement 6-7, 6-4, 6-1.

Gicquel survived a mid-match collapse before coming through against flashy Belgian Xavier Malisse in a final set tie-break 6-4, 1-6, 7-6.

Malisse was suffering from a groin problem in the first set but found his rhythm in the second while his opponent, who had faced some tough three-setters in previous rounds, wilted.

Gicquel recovered in the third against the 2004 finalist and led 5-2 before Malisse hit back to force a tie-break.

Gicquel breezed out to a 6-3 lead in that before finally securing the win on his third match point to qualify for the first ATP final of his career.

Clement, a winner here in 2000 and finalist in 2003, took the first set against Gasquet but thereafter the youngster's greater class shone through.

"I fought right to the end. It was frustrating to lose the first set in the decisive game having had two set points," said Gasquet.

England win

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| | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Pietersen not out | 90 | | | |
| Yardy c Bravo b Samuels | 10 | | | |
| Dalrymple b Samuels | 8 | | | |
| Read c Gayle b Bravo | 4 | | | |
| Mahmood not out | 14 | | | |
| Extras: (lb-11, nb-4, w-10) | 25 | | | |
| Total: (For 7 wkts in 48.3 overs) | 276 | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-82, 2-126, 3-127, 4-162, 5-180, 6-214, 7-232. | | | | |
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Edwards | 7 | 0 | 56 | 0 |
| Taylor | 8.3 | 0 | 64 | 0 |
| Collymore | 10 | 1 | 43 | 0 |
| Gayle | 10 | 1 | 31 | 3 |
| Samuels | 10 | 0 | 45 | 2 |
| Bravo | 3 | 0 | 26 | 1 |

Result: England won by three wickets.

Man-of-the-match: Chris Gayle.

Toss: West Indies

