

## Watson might miss 1st Test

AFP, Perth

All-rounder Shane Watson injured a hamstring playing for Queensland in a domestic one-day game here Friday and is in doubt for next week's first Ashes cricket Test against England.

Watson was bowling the first ball of his sixth over against Western Australia at the WACA Ground when he pulled up sharply, clutching the back of his right leg.

Looking concerned, Watson conferred with Queensland captain Jimmy Maher and teammates before leaving the ground with the team trainer.

Watson was considered a certain selection to bat at six against England in next week's first Test at the Gabba, allowing Australia to go with four fast bowlers and play wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist at seven.

But if Watson is forced to withdraw Australia may look for a replacement all-rounder -- possibly Andrew Symonds -- pick five specialist bowlers, or another batsman.

The injury scare is the latest in a series of untimely set-backs for Watson, who has been restricted to three Tests since making his debut in January 2005.

After breaking into Australia's one-day team in 2002, stress fractures to his back at the start of 2003 forced him to miss the last World Cup.

Then last year he was drafted into the Test team with the intention of becoming the designated allrounder, but dislocated his shoulder diving to field in his second Test.

## ECB to look into Tresco debacle

PTI, London

The England and Wales Cricket Board will conduct a thorough review of the circumstances which led to Marcus Trescothick's pull-out from the Ashes.

"The whole issue will be discussed at length but I need a full understanding of everything before things can be taken any further," England Chairman of selectors David Graveney told 'The Times'.

Trescothick, who returned home on Wednesday following a recurrence of stress-related problems, had to be consoled for two hours by a doctor in the dressing room before boarding the flight for England.

It appears that the ace batsman quit the Ashes tour since the England management refused to allow him to bring his family out to Australia early.

His decision left the touring party in disarray with the first Test only eight days away and raises doubts if the 30-year-old cricketer will ever play for England again.

Coach Duncan Fletcher revealed last night that Trescothick had suffered a recurrence of the depression which forced him to quit the tour of India last February and led to him missing the Champions Trophy last month.

England were told by specialists treating the Somerset opener that he was ready to face the intensity of Test cricket again, but Trescothick complained of feeling stress on Sunday, the first day of the three-day match against New South Wales.

## Heavyweights

FROM PAGE 20  
place on the bench against former club.

West Ham appeared to have turned the corner with consecutive victories over Blackburn Rovers and Arsenal after an eight-game losing streak, but defeat by Middlesbrough last weekend has left them just above the relegation zone.

Arsenal cannot afford any more slip-ups like the 1-0 defeat at West Ham if they are to harbour hopes of reeling in the top two.

They bounced back with a 3-0 stroll against Liverpool last week and will need to be in an equally ruthless mood against Newcastle at the Emirates Stadium, although manager Arsene Wenger may have one eye on Tuesday's must-win home match against Hamburg in the Champions League.

Defeat for Newcastle would increase the chances of manager Glenn Roeder becoming the second Premier League managerial casualty of the season, following Charlton Athletic's sacking of Iain Dowie on Monday.

Charlton, bottom of the table although well in touch with the sides around them, face Reading with Les Reed installed as Dowie's replacement.

Elsewhere, Everton will have to do without influential Australian midfielder Tim Cahill as they take on Bolton Wanderers. Cahill faces two months on the sidelines after injuring his knee against Aston Villa last week.



Indian star batsman Sachin Tendulkar plays a shot during a practice session in Johannesburg yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# The odd man out

Cricket

AFP, London

Every cricket fan knows what fast bowlers are supposed to be like.

Not only do they bowl at lightning speed but also they have the attitude to go with it, be it the pre-match taunting of a Glenn McGrath, the intimidating stare of a Curtly Ambrose, the dauntless self-confidence of Fred Trueman or the relentlessness of Dennis Lillee.

They don't spend too much time worrying about a batsman they may have hit. They don't suffer from homesickness. And if they do, they certainly don't admit to it. Unless, that is, they are Stephen Harmison.

Off the field, the Durham quick is an easy-going family man, who can seem indifferent to his own gifts as a bowler, a likeable trait in many ways but one with the potential to rile his teammates.

However, his natural ability to make a ball rise alarmingly off a good length makes the 28-year-old Durham seamer one of the most dangerous bowlers in world cricket today.

It was Harmison who set the tone

for England's re-invigorated Ashes challenge last year when, on the first morning of the opening Test at Lord's, his bounce crashed into Australia captain Ricky Ponting's helmet, forcing the grille into the batsman's cheek and so nicking a cut that needed stitches.

Shortly afterwards Ponting, whom Harmison holds in high regard, was caught in the slips off England's spearhead.

There were many quicks who wouldn't have given the incident a moment's thought. But when England arrived in Australia earlier this month, Harmison's first act was to express his remorse.

"As a bowler and as a person I was disappointed with myself the way it came about," he said. "I didn't realise the extent of the injury until I got back to my (bowling) mark, and by then it was too late. It was probably the one regret of the whole Ashes series."

Harmison is an inconsistent bowler. When he is good, he is very, very good and when he's bad he's anonymous.

Many the time he has brushed aside a mediocre performance by saying his rhythm "didn't feel right", as if there was nothing else he could have done.

But what separates the truly great

from the rest is that they achieve an impressive minimum standard below which they seldom, if ever, fall.

Former England captain Nasser Hussain, whose consoling words were widely credited with ensuring Harmison's international career didn't end in embarrassing failure on England's last tour of Australia when the bowler lost his run-up, has high hopes for his old strike bowler.

"On his day Steve Harmison can be the best bowler in the world," Hussain told the December issue of the Wisden Cricketer magazine.

"He has exactly what it takes to be successful in Australia: height, pace and bounce. And the Australians fear him."

"But what I would want from him is consistency."

"The issue for Steve is about not settling for mediocrity: he has got to strive to be the best."

"He has to perform not in one Test in five but in three or four in five. After he took 11 wickets against Pakistan at Old Trafford this (English) summer I would have wanted him to work doubly hard, to make even more sacrifices so that he became not just the best in England, but the best in the world."

## Shahjada, Ehsanul

FROM PAGE 17  
pegged back after left-armer Sunny took the wicket of Imitiaz Hossain. Sylhet ended the day without further loss to score 97 in 29 overs.

**KHULNA v RAJSHAH**  
Paceman Shahjada kept on picking up wickets throughout the Khulna innings to keep the game within Rajshahi's reaches. Nazmus Sadat (59) added just four to his overnight score before becoming Shahjada's first victim.

Shahjada, the 20-year-old who bettered his previous best first-class figures (5-81), then kept up his wicket-taking nag as he picked up Tushar Imran (46), Sakib Al Hasan (23), Jamaluddin (13) and Sahagir Hossain (37) among others. But notably, all-rounder Ziaur Rahman's blitzkrieg 30 off 18 balls gave Khulna the edge over their rivals as his run out ended their innings for 312.

Set to score 227, Rajshahi started badly as national seamer Syed Rasel dismissed Farhad (1) but it was left-armer Razzaq who took two key wickets -- Forhad Reza and Naeem Islam -- to leave Rajshahi in a tricky situation at 49 for three.

They now require a further 178 runs with Junaid Imrose (31\*) and Mushfiqur Rahim (10\*) still remaining along with six other batsmen.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
**DHAKA:** First Innings: 370 all out in 108.5 overs (Ashraf 121, Al

Shahriar 55, Sharif 41; Sajidul 5-55); Second Innings: 46-0 in 9 overs; **BARISAL:** First Innings: 175 all out in 57.3 overs (Kabir 64, Sonnet 27; Shahadat 3-15, Sharif 3-43).

**SYLHET:** First Innings: 265 and second innings: 97-1 in 29 overs (Golam 39\*, Kapali 33\*); **CHITTAGONG:** First Innings: 360 all out in 137 overs (Ehsanul 153, Faisal 121; Enamul 4-84).

**KHULNA:** First Innings: 179 and second innings: 312 all out in 97 overs (Sadat 59, Imran 46; Shahjada 7-95).

**RAJSHAH:** First Innings: 265 and second innings: 49-3 in 24 overs (Junaid 31\*; Razzaq 2-14).

## The Galloping

FROM PAGE 17  
Among the teams he directed from the bench were Chilean club Colo-Colo, Greek side AEK Athens, Egyptian side Al-Masri and Panhellenic Melbourne in Australia.

Puskas even briefly held the job of caretaker coach of Hungary's national squad in 1993.

Born in 1927 in Budapest, he was only 15 when he started playing in the Hungarian league for Kispest, which in 1949 changed its name to Honved, or Army. From 1927 to 1956, Puskas scored 358 goals in 349 matches.

He made his international debut at the age of 18.

## Biman on the verge of regaining title

SPORTS REPORTER

A draw in today's 15th and final round match will secure Bangladesh Biman the title of the Dutch-Bangla First Division Chess League.

On 45 points, the star-studded Biman take on Muktioddha Sangsad at the federation hall-room in a bid to stay above newcomers Chittagong Mohammedan -- second with 42.5 points.

Defending champions Leonine, featuring three Grand Masters, virtually have no chance to retain their trophy as they are third with 41 points.

In yesterday's 14th round matches, Biman beat Toyota Motors 3-1. Chittagong Moha-mmedan defeated Narayanganj City Chess Club by the same margin, Leonine blanked Titas Club 4-0, Destiny beat Friends Chess Power 2.5-1.5, Dhaka University beat Sonali Bank 3-1, Prodeep Sangha beat Faith 2.5-1.5 while Farashganj drew 2-2 with Rajshahi Daba Unnayan Sangstha.

## Sarfraz wants to coach India

PTI, New Delhi

Pakistani great Sarfraz Nawaz has said he was open to taking up the role of India's fast bowling coach.

The 57-year-old from Lahore said he had even offered his services to the Indian cricket team when they were in Pakistan earlier.

"I was present at the function hosted by the Indian High Commissioner Shiv Shankar Menon (rpt Shiv Shankar Menon). I told coach Greg Chappell and captain Rahul Dravid that either they can come to the Academy in Lahore or I can come there. My offer still stands," Sarfraz said at a press conference.

The former Pakistani Test bowler is in the city on a brief coaching assignment on the invitation of Delhi and District Cricket Association.

Sarfraz, who has the distinction of scoring 1000 runs and taking 100 wickets, said he would be happy to share his knowledge of reverse swing with the budding Indian bowlers.

"With destiny's blessings, I was able to do it without tampering the ball," said the bowler who is considered the pioneer of the art of reverse swing.

"It needs slight modification in action. One needs to rotate the ball at high speed."

## Steyn blows

FROM PAGE 17  
overs with Munaf Patel conceding 36 runs off his last two overs and Shanthakumaran Sreesanth being hit for 44 off his last four.

Steyn ensured that India were never in with a realistic chance of winning, although Dravid and Irfan Pathan (34) gave them some hope with a seventh wicket stand of 84.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
Final scoreboard in the 12-a-side limited-overs match between the Rest of South Africa and India at Willowmoore Park on Thursday:

**REST OF SOUTH AFRICA:** 255 for 8 in 50 overs (Petersen 38, McKenzie 22, Prince 31, Rudolph not out 72, Morkel 57; Zaheer 3-44, Kumble 2-31)

**INDIA:** 218 all out in 49.1 overs (Kaif 30, Dravid 79, Pathan 34, extras 34; Steyn 5-22, Thomas 2-44)

**Result: Rest of South Africa won by 37 runs.**

**Man-of-the-match: Dale Steyn.**

## Injury list

FROM PAGE 20  
"I'm super-motivated. I always want to beat Valencia despite making my name at the club," said Palop, showing little love for his former employers.

Third-placed Real Madrid play host to Racing Santander on Saturday and are looking for revenge after a humiliating 2-1 defeat in the same fixture last season.

"It's going to be strange going back there with a visiting team," said Racing coach Miguel Angel Portugal, a former Real Madrid player and the coach of the Spanish giant's reserve team last season.

"Hopefully the things I learnt at Real I'm starting to be able to translate to the players here at Racing, although to compare the two sides is like trying to compare a multinational with a corner shop."

"For me, Real Madrid is still the best club in the world while what we are trying to do at Racing is just be as good as we can be," added Portugal on Thursday.

David Beckham is doubtful to play for Real after suffering continued problems with his left knee.

The former England captain exercised in the gym and not with the rest of the squad on Wednesday and Thursday.

At the other end of the table, bottom side Real Sociedad have yet to win this season but will be looking to end that sorry streak at home to fellow strugglers Real Betis on Sunday.

# Tait, Hoggard shine

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

Shaun Tait boosted his chances of playing in next week's Ashes opener with a key England wicket in a hostile spell of fast bowling for South Australia at the Adelaide Oval Friday.

Tait claimed the wicket of England opener Andrew Strauss, leg before wicket for a two-ball duck, in the first of three erratic overs of fast bowling.

The South Australian slinger is vying for the third fast bowler's spot in the Test team with Stuart Clark and Mitchell Johnson.

Tait began his spell with a delivery that nearly decapitated first slip and ran away for wickets but he had Strauss lbw two deliveries later to a scorcher.

England responded to the shock of the Strauss dismissal by sending in fast bowler Matthew Hoggard as nightwatchman.

At the close of a fluctuating first day's play in the three-day tour match, England were 24 for one in reply to the home team's declaration of 247 for seven.

Alastair Cook, likely to be promoted to open the England innings in next Thursday's Brisbane Test following the return home of Marcus Trescothick, was on six and Hoggard 10 not out, having survived a testing period, crowded by fieldsmen.

"He's (Tait) an exciting breed. You don't get too many fast bowlers

that bowl that quick," Lehmann said.

"So you'd like to see him play (Tests) and hopefully he gets his chance in Brisbane.

"Really, it's up to the selectors (to decide) whether they want two of those type of bowlers (with fellow speedster Brett Lee) in their side, or they don't."

Earlier, Lehmann crafted a fine rearguard innings, only to throw away a century with a run out.

Lehmann and Cameron Borgas steadied South Australia from 25 for four in the first hour with a partnership of 157 but both played a major part in their dismissals.

Lehmann was out for 99 when he took on James Anderson's throw from the deep and failed to make his ground while trying to complete a second run.

The former Test batsman played beautifully, driving the quicks and sweeping and nudging the spinners.

Borgas played the anchor role to support his skipper but was out for 73 when he attempted to slog left-arm spinner Monty Panesar over mid-wicket.

Instead he only skied the ball to Cook, who took a comfortable catch near the boundary.

Hoggard made early inroads for England with a spell of 3-16 and finished the innings with 3-40.

England claimed 4-4 in 19 balls to have South Australia 25 for four at one stage.

Anderson took the first wicket of the match and had 1-14.

England twice made double

breakthroughs, first when Anderson had former Test opener Matthew Elliott (11) caught behind to an underneath edge and Hoggard had Daniel Harris (10) caught at third slip next ball.

Minutes later Hoggard had Mark Cosgrove (one) caught down the legside off the glove and then next ball Callum Ferguson (duck) padded up to a straight delivery and was out lbw.

Panesar (1-54) found it heavy going in his attempt to claim the spinner's role in the Test side.

England coach Duncan Fletcher was happy with Panesar's efforts, although he wanted him to bowl with more flight and loop instead of darting deliveries in.

"He's just got to make sure he doesn't fire it in as much. I think he needs to give it a bit more air," Fletcher said.

England's pace attack lacked punch as Steve Harmison sat out the game when management opted not to risk him when he awoke with tightness in his side.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
Scoreboard at stumps on the opening day of the three-day tour match between South Australia and England at Adelaide Oval on Friday:

**SOUTH AUSTRALIA:** First innings 247 for 7 dec in 81.1 overs (Borgas 73, Lehmann 99, Deitz 24; Hoggard 3-40)

**ENGLAND:** First innings 24 for one in 6 overs (Cook not out 6, Hoggard not out 10)

**Toss:** South Australia

## BAF basketball

UNB, Dhaka

BAF Base Zahurul Haque clinched the title of the Air Force Inter-base Basketball Competition beating BAF Base Kurmitola 46-36 points in the final at the BAF Zahurul Haque Base premises on Thursday.

Air Commodore Khandakar Iftekar witnessed the final and distributed prizes among the winners.

Janus of BAF Base Zahurul Haque was adjudged the man of the match.

A total of six teams took part in the five-day meet.

## BHF strays

FROM PAGE 17  
the meeting, the BHF chief reportedly sat with the general secretary and the vice-presidents in a closed-door meeting later to come with the temporary solution.

Barí, however, claimed that it was a unanimous decision to start the national camp.

"The federation will decide before the Asiad how to finish the league, which will start after the Doha Games," Barí added showing no sympathy to the teams in contention for the title who have been running their camps with foreign players in the squad.

It can be mentioned that Mohammedan and Mariners were all but out of the title race when they jointly stated that they would not play further in the Super Five. Mohammedan did not turn out for their match against Usha while Mariners forfeited their game against Sonali Bank.

Abahani are sharing the lead with defending champions Usha on 24 points.

