

## Because of mis-signal

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Australian wicketkeeper-batsman Adam Gilchrist revealed a bungled communication with the dressing room was the catalyst for his extraordinary batting blitzkrieg against England at the WACA ground here Saturday.

On the third day of the third Ashes Test, Gilchrist smashed the second-fastest century in Test cricket history, reaching three figures in 57 balls.

Only West Indian great Viv Richards's 56-ball effort was faster, with Gilchrist taking just 17 balls to race from his half-century to his hundred.

Speaking at the end of the day's play, Gilchrist said he and batting partner Michael Clarke had incorrectly thought the instruction had come from the dressing room to chase quick runs to enable a declaration late in the day.

"After I got my 50... we threw the question back to the rooms. Did we want to try and have a look at this tonight if we could press on?" he said. "We took it as a yes. Apparently it was a no."

"At our boot camp, communication skills was one of our topics and we obviously didn't pass that one, but it worked out well."

Gilchrist, whose batting form in the past two Ashes series against England has been indifferent, reached his half-century in 40 balls and in doing so equalled the Ashes record.

He then went berserk, hitting four sixes from the next six balls he faced as Richards's 20-year record suddenly entered the equation.

The left-hander hit three sixes and a four in four balls from spinner Monty Panesar, who duly went into the record books for the most expensive Ashes over (24 runs).

Gilchrist was denied the record by England seamer Matthew Hoggard and said he had no idea he

was so close.

"I've never known what the fastest Test century was," he said.

"I would have guessed Viv Richards was somewhere in the mix -- it's a shame I didn't tickle that wide one from Hoggard, it would have been good."

"I think Viv deserves that mantle."

Gilchrist said he decided to go after Panesar as he was hitting with the breeze at his back.

"I didn't walk out there with anything other than survival, setting up an innings and keep supporting Pup (Clarke)," he said.

"When Panesar came on at that end, there was a decent breeze and I made the decision to attack him."

Clarke said the innings was awesome to watch.

"It was get a single and let him go," he said.

"Every ball he hit in the middle of the bat and it was great to watch."

## BCCI expels Dalmiya

Cricket

AFP, Jaipur

Former world cricket chief Jagmohan Dalmiya was on Saturday expelled from the Indian cricket board on charges of misappropriation of funds.

The former Indian cricket chief is accused of mishandling funds of around 890,000 dollars relating to the 1996 World Cup which India hosted jointly with Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Dalmiya, credited with turning the gentlemen's game into a lucrative global sport, has been given the right to appeal after three years for inclusion in the board, media committee member Rajiv Shukla said.

Shukla said the resolution was moved by Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) president Sharad Pawar, who suggested to

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PHOTO: AFP

SAW ME BLUDGEONING? Australian batsman Adam Gilchrist raises his helmet in jubilation after his swashbuckling century on the third day of the third Ashes Test against England in Perth on Saturday.

## Hurricane Gilchrist

### Aussies have stranglehold on third Test

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Australia were on the verge of regaining the Ashes after their batsmen, led by a devastating Adam Gilchrist, smashed England all over the park on Day Three of the third Test at an oppressively hot WACA ground here Saturday.

On a day which brought temperatures in the low 40s in the shade and 10 degrees hotter on the field, the Australians declared late in the day at 527 for five, with Gilchrist not out on 102 after belting the second fastest hundred in Test history from just 57 balls.

Trailing by 556 runs, England were already in trouble in their second innings at 19 for one at stumps, with Ian Bell not out on nine and Alastair Cook on seven.

England opener Andrew Strauss again failed, adjudged lbw for a duck padding up to Brett Lee from the fourth ball of the innings.

The Australians, already 2-0 up in the series, would regain the Ashes with victory here.

Despite their dominant position Gilchrist said the Australians still weren't discussing the possibility of regaining the Ashes in Perth.

"It hasn't been spoken about," he said.

"If guys are doing it, they are doing it on their own. We have nine wickets to get, we are in a good position and it is very exciting and we've fought hard. But it certainly hasn't been spoken about."

Besieged England coach Duncan Fletcher said his side had squandered a great chance on the second day, but that they had to fight over the last two days

of the match.

"Practically, it is a very, very difficult challenge, but the individuals have to come here and show what they are worth," he said.

"They have to make sure they pitch up tomorrow in a positive frame of mind."

Mike Hussey, Michael Clarke and Gilchrist all made centuries in the Australian second innings, the latter launching an extraordinary assault on the tiring England bowlers late in the day to burst out of his Ashes form slump.

Gilchrist reached his half-century in 40 balls and then took just another 17 to reach triple figures, with 12 fours and four sixes, and in doing so replicated Doug Walters' famous century in a session in 1974 at the same ground.

After reaching 50, Gilchrist thrashed four sixes from the next six balls he faced as Viv Richards' record of a century in 56 balls came under threat.

Panesar went for 24 runs in one over, an unwanted Ashes record for a player who claimed three wickets in the second innings to have eight for the match.

Gilchrist, who has enjoyed a lean time with the bat in the last two Ashes series, seemed certain to break the record, but was ultimately denied by England seamer Matthew Hoggard.

When Ricky Ponting declared Australia's innings closed, Clarke (135 not out) and Gilchrist had added 162 in 98 minutes.

Clarke reached his century in 130 balls, with 13 fours and one six.

Hussey, controversially overlooked during the entire 2005 Ashes series in England, continued his incredible run at the top level when he notched his maiden Test century against England and his fifth overall.

The left-hander pulled the unlucky Harmison straight down the ground for his 12th four to bring up the milestone in 213 minutes from 148 balls, but was caught behind off the bowling of Panesar from the last ball before tea.

Hussey had enjoyed a fair slice of luck, as he was lucky to be given not out on 15 and was dropped twice.

It was a horror day in the field for the English, who showed great spirit but could only watch the Ashes slipping away as they not only bowled without luck, but had to contend with energy-sapping heat.

A number of catches went begging. Geraint Jones missed a stumping and confident appeals were turned down as they claimed just four wickets on the day.

Earlier, opener Matthew Hayden missed out on a century when he fell for 92, while Australian captain Ricky Ponting passed the 500-run mark in the series in making 75.

Highlighting the enormity of the task facing England, the highest successful fourth innings run chase at the WACA is 342, when Australia beat India back in 1977.

In further bad news for the

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## IN THE FAST LANE

Ten fastest 100s in Test cricket history:	Balls	Batsman	Against	Year
56	V Richards (WI)	Eng	1986	
57	A Gilchrist (Aus)	Eng	2006	
67	J Gregory (Aus)	SA	1921	
69	S Chanderpaul (WI)	Aus	2003	
71	R Fredericks (WI)	Aus	1975	
74	M Khan (Pak)	NZ	1976	
74	K Dev (Ind)	SL	1986	
74	M Azharuddin (Ind)	SA	1996	
76	G Jessop (Eng)	Aus	1902	
77	B Lara (WI)	Pak	2006	

## Fearless Internacional

AFP, Yokohama

International coach Abel Braga on Saturday said he was not losing sleep over the Club World Cup final with Barcelona and taunted the favourites over their Champions League form.

The Brazilian coach acknowledged the talent of players such as Ronaldinho and Deco but said Barcelona had failed to shine in Europe this season.

"When you saw them play in the Champions League against Chelsea you couldn't say they were very high quality," he said.

"I'm sure they have talent but I'm not nervous and I can still sleep at night."

The European champions lost away to Chelsea in October and drew at home two weeks later, only rescuing their title defence with a win against Werder Bremen.

However, they are widely tipped on Sunday against Inter, the Copa Libertadores champions, who beat Egypt's Al Ahly by a solitary goal in the semi-finals.

"Tomorrow we will show you a much better performance than we did on Wednesday," Braga said.

"Of course, we have great

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## Greatness beckons Barcelona

Football

AFP, Yokohama

Frank Rijkaard's feared Barcelona can lay claim to greatness on Sunday by winning the team's first Club World Cup.

Victory against Brazil's Internacional would outdo Johan Cruyff's famed dream team, which was beaten by Sao Paulo in the equivalent fixture in 1992.

The European champions lit up International Stadium Yokohama on Thursday when 62,000 watched Ronaldinho and Deco cut Mexico's Club America to pieces.

Any doubts that Barcelona were favourites for the title quickly faded as Rijkaard's men put four unanswered goals past the CONCACAF champions.

"They have pace, skill and imagination," observed America coach Luis Fernando Tena.

"I don't think Inter will beat them. Compared to what I saw from Inter and what I saw today, Barcelona is by far the stronger team."

Former AC Milan midfielder Rijkaard, who can become the first European to win the title as a

player and a coach, has put together what is already touted as the world's best team since arriving at the Camp Nou in 2003.

After a rocky start, Barcelona finished second in La Liga that season and come to Japan as two-time defending Spanish champions.

A 2-1 win over Arsenal at Stade de France in May sealed the second European title in Barcelona's history, matching the exploits of Cruyff's Ronald Koeman, Pep Guardiola, Michael Laudrup and Hristo Stoichkov.

Now with the exceptional Deco and Ronaldinho, rumored to be set for a record third consecutive World Player of the Year award next week, Rijkaard has the creative talent to go one better.

Eidur Gudjohnsen and Ludovic Giuly are able replacements for injured forwards Samuel Eto'o and Lionel Messi, and the back four of Carlos Puyol, Rafael Marquez, Giovanni van Bronckhorst and Gianluca Zambrotta are second to none.

He said Barca were approaching the final with the same unity which helped him win the 1989 and 1990 titles with Milan.

"We had fans, management and players united. Our mind was together to win and that's what's happening today for us," Rijkaard said.

But the Dutchman said the favourites were taking nothing for granted given South American champions' proud record in the tournament.

"Inter are a great team and the last editions of the tournament were won by teams from South America so we're not going to go on the pitch with the idea that we can win easily," he said.

"It's the opposite. I think we have to be very concentrated and play very well to get a good result."

Rijkaard will be especially wary of Inter's Alexandre Pato, the pacy 17-year-old tipped as the next big thing in Brazilian football after scoring in both his professional matches so far.

Pato has already caught the attention of Ronaldinho, another product of Porto Alegre who was nurtured by Inter's city rivals Gremio.

"My friends in Porto Alegre have told me about Pato," Ronaldinho said. "They said he's a very good player with very good

qualities, and very skilful."

Ronaldinho, 26, was bracing for a fierce reception from the Inter fans in the stadium where he lifted the 2002 World Cup.

"I know the Inter supporters will boo me but also the Gremio fans will want Barcelona to win," he said.

"I will be a Gremio supporter all my life but here I'm going to play against Inter as if I was a normal rival. It's more important because it's the final, not because it's Inter."

Inter can also call on Luiz Adriano, Pato's 19-year-old roommate who nodded the semi-final winner against Al Ahly, and robust captain Fernandao -- "the best player in Brazil", according to coach Abel Braga.

Inter qualified for the tournament when they won their first Copa Libertadores title in August, beating Sao Paulo 4-3 in the two-legged final.

Sao Paulo won last year's Club World Cup with a 1-0 victory over Liverpool in the final.

Barcelona's holding midfielder Edmilson is back in training after recovering from gastroenteritis but may not be fit enough to play.

## Small consolation for Henry

AFP, Zagreb

Thierry Henry may have missed out on the World and European Footballer of the Year awards but the Arsenal striker can at least draw comfort from being named the best player in Europe by a Croatia newspaper.

Croatia's main sports daily, Sportske Novosti, conducted a vote of ten leading European coaches with the France international emerging top of the poll.

The 29-year-old forward came first with 37 votes, followed by Barcelona's Ronaldinho and Fabio Cannavaro of Real Madrid who won 28 and 24 votes respectively.

The coaches who took part in the vote included Real Madrid's Fabio Capello, Bayern's Felix Magath, Milan's Carlo Ancelotti, Inter's Roberto Mancini and the Netherlands coach Marco van Basten.

It is the sixth year that the Sportske Novosti daily has elected European player of the year. Last year's title went to Chelsea's Frank Lampard.

## Reds down Charlton

AFP, London



Liverpool's recent resurgence gathered pace as they produced a ruthless display to defeat Charlton 3-0 at The Valley on Saturday.

Rafa Benitez's side were far too strong for struggling Charlton and Xabi Alonso's early penalty was followed by second half strikes from Craig Bellamy and Steven Gerrard to complete a convincing win.

Liverpool are unbeaten in the league since their defeat at Arsenal last month, winning four of their last five matches and keeping six consecutive clean sheets to give renewed hope of a top four finish in the Premiership.

Charlton have won just once in six matches since Les Reed replaced Iain Dowie as head coach and the London club, mired in the relegation zone, face a long struggle to beat the drop.

Reed was without on-loan Liverpool goalkeeper Scott Carson as Premiership rules state players cannot feature against the club that has loaned them out.

Thomas Myhre came in for Carson but he was picking the ball out of his net after just three minutes after a blunder by former Liverpool defender Djimi Traore.

Charlton left-back Traore, who spent seven years at Anfield, lunged at a cross and completely missed the ball before his foot crunched into Jermaine Pennant's head.

It was as clear a penalty as you will ever see and Alonso calmly stroked the spot-kick past Myhre to give Liverpool the ideal start.

Liverpool showed no signs of sitting on their lead and it took a superb goal-line clearance from Luke Young to deny Bellamy after the Welsh striker had dribbled around Myhre.

Traore went some way to making up for his earlier mistake in the 17th minute when he followed Young's example by alertly hacking Pennant's shot off the line.

Liverpool were in complete control but Charlton almost snatched an equaliser their play would hardly have deserved when Jose Reina spilled Andy Reid's shot and the ball fell perfectly for Hermann Hreidarsson. But, despite having an empty goal to aim at, the Charlton defender lashed his shot over the crossbar.

Mark Gonzalez's powerful header from Bellamy's cross forced Myhre to make a fine save just before half-time.

Norwegian keeper Myhre made an even better stop three minutes after the interval as he tipped Alonso's curling strike over the bar.

Bellamy and Kuyt combined to carve open the Charlton defence with a swift exchange of passes midway through the second half, but the Dutch striker's shot cannonned to safety off a post.

Darren Ambrose struck a blistering volley that skimmed Reina's crossbar in the 75th minute as Charlton found their stride.

Darren Bent went close with a snap-shot from 10 yards moments later but Liverpool raised their tempo and sealed the win in the 82nd minute.

Bellamy accelerated away from Souleymane Diawara and gave Myhre no chance with a stunning finish from an acute angle.

Gerrard rubbed salt into Charlton's wounds in the 89th minute when he surged onto Peter Crouch's header and curled a shot past Myhre.



PHOTO: AFP

Qatari youths celebrate on the streets of Doha after their football team won gold at 15th Asian Games beating Iraq at the Al-Sadd Football Stadium on Friday.