

Robertson to miss World Open squash

CARDIFF, Sept 2: Chris Robertson, the Australian world number three, has been forced to miss the World Open squash championships in Johannesburg later this month through injury, reports AFP.

Cardiff-based Robertson, runner-up in the British Open at Wembley in April, has been suffering from a hip injury and would not have been fit in time for the championships which run from September 21st to 26th.

"The injury has cleared up but I have not been able to prepare properly for a major tournament," he said. "I am bitterly disappointed as this is the first world event in South Africa since sanctions were lifted, but at three-quarters fitness I don't think I would do myself or the tournament justice."

Title-holder Rodney Martin, who lost his world number three ranking to Robertson earlier in the day, moves up to third seed in Johannesburg, where all the other leading players are taking part.

Aussie clubs told to change their ethnic names

MELBOURNE, Sept 2: The Australian Soccer Federation Wednesday warned four rebel clubs that they would be expelled from the National Soccer League if they refused to change their names, reports AP.

Four Melbourne NSL clubs are threatening legal action to force the ASF to at least delay their decision to force teams with ethnic names to make a switch.

Officials from the four Melbourne-based clubs, Melbourne Croatia, South Melbourne Hellas, Preston Macedonia and Heidelberg Alexander have asked the ASF for a two-year moratorium on the issue and have threatened legal action.

ASF chief commissioner Ian Holmes said the federation was prepared to take on any rebel clubs and the Australian body would have the support of FIFA, soccer's world governing body.

"FIFA has specific rulings about taking football matters to the courts," he said.

"They would lose membership of the ASF and the state federation and FIFA would ensure that their players became free agents," Holmes said. He said if the clubs initiated legal action, the ASF would have no choice but to comply with the FIFA ruling and the clubs would be forced to forfeit their National Soccer League membership.

Holmes said he realised some clubs were being pressured by their supporters but the move was for the long term good of the game.

The ruling, handed down in June, said that no team would be admitted to the national league if they had the name of another country, state, or place or had political connotations.

BCCB ID cards for cricketers

Sports Reporter

The Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) will issue identity cards to all cricketers of the Premier and First Division leagues by September 18, says press releases.

Registered players have been asked to contact the BCCB by September 10.

Shah Sports soccer

Sports Reporter

Kashmitola Shaheen Smriti Sangsad moved into the final of the third Shah Sports Cup soccer tournament by beating Lalbagh Tarun Sangha five goals to four in the tie-breaker at the Hazaribagh Park ground yesterday, says a press release.

Both teams were locked 1-1 after the scheduled time.

N'ganj lead Div II chess

Sports Reporter

Narayanganj Chess Club with seven points led the table of the Second Division chess league after the completion of the second of the eight-round meet at the National Sports Council chess room yesterday.

Patuakhali, who have earned six and a half points, followed them.

Those who have collected six points each are, Kamalapur Samaj Kallayan Sangha, South Kamalapur Chess Club, Narayanganj Mashgul Mahfil Club and Ekok Sangha.

Narayanganj Chess Club beat Golden Chess Club 3-1, Patuakhali beat Arunayatan Sangha 3.5-5, Mashgul beat Jahangirnagar University 2.5-1.5 and Ekok Sangha beat Pushpa Mela 3-1 in their respective second round encounters.

Twenty-eight teams are taking part in the Bangladesh Chess Federation organised Second Division league which began on Monday last.

Aussie-Lanka 2nd Test drawn

COLOMBO, Sept 2: Despite an exciting start by their openers, Sri Lanka, chasing a target of 286 in 62 overs, settled for a draw on the final day of the second Test against Australia here Wednesday, reports AFP.

The home side reached 136 for two in 54 overs when both teams decided to call off the match 25 minutes before the scheduled close. Australia now lead 1-0 in the three-Test series after their 16-run victory in the opening match.

Sri Lanka showed no indication they were interested in victory as they made slow progress for a large part of the two sessions at the J. R. Jayawardene Stadium on the final day.

The highlight of the Sri Lankan innings was a record-breaking 110-run opening wicket stand against Australia between Roshan Mahanama and Chandika Hathurusinghe, bettering their own record of 76 established in the first Test.

Australia's first innings bowling hero Craig McDermott applied the brakes just when Mahanama and Hathurusinghe seemed to have set their sights on the 286-run mark.

The burly fast bowler, who took four for 53 in the first innings, had Hathurusinghe beautifully caught at gully by Tom Moody for 49 and then trapped Mahanama leg-before for 69.

Hathurusinghe just missed his second half-century in the match after facing 126 balls and hitting four boundaries in a 155-minute stay. Mahanama, whose 50 was his fourth Test half-century, hit one six and four fours in a fluent innings.

Scoreboard on the fifth and

final day of the second cricket Test between Sri Lanka and Australia Wednesday:



D JONES ... century

for five visitors had topped at one stage on the fourth day. Jones was involved in a 131 run sixth wicket stand with all-rounder Greg Matthews, who scored 51 with four boundaries to collect his second half century in the match.

Matthews, a specialist off-spinner and the hero of Australia's first Test Victory, failed to claim a single wicket in either innings, giving away 59 runs in 21 overs in the second innings. McDermott finished with Australia's best figures of two for 32.

Jones, who made 77 in Australia's first innings, was awarded the man of the match award.

The third Test will be played at Suburban Moratuwa starting Tuesday.

SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA: First innings 247

Table with 2 columns: Player Name and Runs. Includes M Taylor lbw b Hathurusinghe (26), T Moody b Muralidharan (54), D Breen c Mahanama b Anurasi (15), D Jones not out (100), M Waugh lbw b Muralidharan (0), A Border lbw b Anurasi (28), G Matthews c Mahanama b Anurasi (51), I Healy not out (4), Extras: (b-4, lb-9, nb-5) (18), Total: (six wickets declared) (296).

Table with 2 columns: Player Name and Runs. Includes Roshan Mahanama lbw McDermott (69), Chandika Hathurusinghe c Moody b McDermott (49), Asanka Gurusinha not out (8), Sanath Jayasuriya not out (1), Extras: (lb-6, nb-3) (9), Total: (for 2 wks) (136), Fall of wicket: 1-110, 2-129.

Table with 2 columns: Player Name and Runs. Includes Aravinda de Silva (19), Ramesh Kaluwithana (5), Chamaka Ramanayake (21), Dilip Lavanah (5), Don Anurasi (4), Muttiah Muralidharan (0), Result: Match drawn, Man-of-the-match: Dean Jones, Umpires: Ignatius Anandappa and Udaya Wickremasinghe.



Former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich of Germany on way to beating Frenchman Oliver Delaitre in the first round of the US Open in New York Tuesday. —Star TV photos

Fischer, Spassky begin their re-match

SVETI STEFAN, Yugoslavia, Sept 2: Bobby Fischer returned to professional chess Wednesday for the first time since he won the World Championship exactly 20 years ago, opening his doors 5 million rematch against Boris Spassky in this luxurious Adriatic resort, reports AP.

Taking white, Fischer furrowed his brow, stroked his beard, swiveled in his deep leather chair, and made his traditional opening move of pawn to e4.

Spassky followed with black pawn to e5, and thus began one of the most intriguing and controversial chess matches of modern times at a 3:38 pm (15:38 GMT).

At issue is whether Fischer — who never played a professional match again after 1972 because of a falling out with the International Chess Federation — has allowed his formidable talents to lapse during two decades as a mysterious recluse.

It took the wiles of a Yugoslavian wheeler-dealer, Jozef Vastljovic, and the encouragement of Fischer's 19-year-old Hungarian girlfriend to lure the American friend out of retirement.

To play in the match, Fischer is defying UN sanctions against Yugoslavia and US government warnings to abide by the sanctions.

Vastljovic put up the \$1.5 million purse, \$1.35 million for the winner and \$150,000 to the loser.

A Yugoslav nationalist, he has attempted to make the match into a gaudy, elaborate spectacle to show the world that his country is surviving its international condemnation for fomenting the violence of the Bosnian war.

However, turnout has been disappointing. Only about one-quarter of the expected 800 journalists have come to cover the match and but handful — all of them Yugoslav — of the world's 300 or so grandmasters.

Fischer, 49, made clear Tuesday that he does not care about his government's warnings not to play here. He publicly spat on a cease-and-desist letter written him by the US Treasury. If he returns to the United States, as he said he plans to, he could face a \$100,000 fine and 10 years imprisonment.

Asked why he had chosen to break the sanctions, Spassky, 55, replied Tuesday that first, he is a "professional" and second he thought the game would be "very good politics for chess and not only for chess."

The only American ever to win the world chess championship, Fischer was stripped of the title in 1975 when he refused to play Anatoly Karpov after quarreling with the International Chess Federation over contest rules.

Fischer appeared to have been nursing numerous private grudges — many of them against rivals Karpov, Garry Kasparov, the reigning champion and Viktor Korchnoi — during his time out of the public eye.

Describing how the chess world would be different if he had remained active the last two decades, Fischer said at a news conference Tuesday.

"For one thing there would be much less cheating. These criminals — Karpov, Kasparov, Korchnoi — have absolutely destroyed chess by their immoral, unethical pre-arranging of games."

Fischer and Kasparov fixed their championship matches in the mid-1980s.

Wednesday's match took place in a converted dining hall of the Maestral hotel, with some 200 spectators allowed to watch through a partition opening 15 metres (yards) away. Photographers were banned for all but the first three minutes of the match.

On the sidelines, Vastljovic, a short stocky man worth millions from a variety of murky business ventures, paced nervously at the start of the match.

Asked how he felt to have pulled off the coup of snaring Fischer, he replied in English, "I'll think about it tomorrow, man. I'm too excited."

Fischer's girlfriend, Zita Rajcsanyi, watched calmly from the first row dressed in sleek and tennis shoes. "I feel good about it," said the young woman, who is among Hungary's top junior players.

prisonment. Spassky, the easy-going Russian who has adopted France as his country, is no longer among the world's top-ranked players, but is still considered talented enough to provide a fair test of Fischer's skills.

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Essex tail thwarts Hampshire

LONDON, Sept 2: Essex, the English county championship favourites, were indebted to their ninth-wicket pair for a healthy first innings lead over Hampshire after the second day's play at Chelmsford on Tuesday, reports AFP.

John Childs (43) and Peter Such (35 not out) came together with the score on 219, still 14 runs adrift of Hampshire's total.

The 41-year-old Childs has a batting average of eight, and is a natural tail-end. Such had an average of 3.67 to build on.

Yet each made the highest score of his career and together they saw Essex through to an unexpected lead of 65.

Earlier, Paul Prichard had held the innings together with 82, but progress was slow. The damage was done by spinner Ian Turner, who tore out the middle order to finish with five for 81.

The home side earned two batting bonus points, leaving them 16 short of the tally that would guarantee them the title.

During the day, England skipper Graham Gooch went to

hospital to have a wrist problem checked, but he is expected to play on.

Northamptonshire's faint hopes of exploiting any faltering on Essex's part, were dashed when their reply to Yorkshire's massive 508 hit the rocks.

They slumped to 60 for three before skipper Rob Bailey and David Capel took them safely through to the close, with Bailey unbeaten on 82. Northants still need 212 to avoid the follow-on.

Surrey's Graham Thorpe hit 216, the first double-century of his career, as his side amassed 557 against Somerset at the Oval. It was Surrey's highest score of the season.

Thorpe hit 16 fours and shared a fifth-wicket stand of 211 in 34 overs with Alistair Brown (129).

Somerset's Dutch paceman Andre van Troost picked up six for 104 and off-spinner Harvey Truamp three for 143 in 40 overs.

A gritty 50 partnership between Graham Rose and Robbie Turner hauled Somerset out of trouble after they had slipped to 14 for two when they began their reply.

Two centuries of contrasting style put Worcestershire in a commanding position against

Warwickshire at New Road.

Graeme Hick made 146, the 67th century of his first-class career, reaching the hundred off 173 balls, wicket-keeper Steve Rhodes picked up the theme if not the tempo — his century took 275 balls, and his innings has so far occupied 88 overs.

Derbyshire skipper Kim Barnett carried his bat for the first time to lead his team into a commanding position over Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

Barnett's 156, supported well by the Derbyshire tail, steered the side to a first innings' lead of 164 before Dominic Cork had Notts in early trouble in their second innings.

Cork, following his five for 36 in the first innings, trapped left-hander Mark Saxelby lbw in his second over as Notts finished still 159 runs adrift.

Rain allowed only three overs on the second day of the match between Glamorgan and Sussex. Glamorgan advanced to 177 for five, without further loss.

The weather was only slightly kinder at Bristol, where Gloucestershire moved to 63 for no wicket against Leicestershire in the 18 overs possible.

Gower's comments won't affect England's tour: Indian Board

MADRAS, India, Sept 2: England's tour of India starting next January will not be affected by batsman David Gower's allegation that Indian bowlers tampered with the ball during a Test match in 1990, an official said today, reports Reuter.

"It is absurd to presume that England's tour of India was in jeopardy due to the unfounded comments made by Gower," said Chandappa Nagaraj, secretary for the Board of Control of Cricket in India.

"We have not said anything of the sort and rumours to that effect are not true," he said in a telephone interview from the city of Bangalore.

Gower said on Monday he was willing to apologise to Indian cricket authorities for the claim made in his recently published autobiography.

He said: "I want to go to India with England this winter, and I really hope too much is not made of a throwaway line in a 100,000-word book. I will certainly apologise to

the Indians about the remark if that is what is required to defuse the situation."

Nagaraj said Indian cricket authorities had not sought an apology from Gower, but "he is welcome to retract his comments if good sense prevails on him."

The board's working committee will discuss the issue at its meeting after this month. If any apology is received from Gower, that will be placed before the working committee.

Gower says in his book that India's efforts to make the ball "wobble around did not pre-

clude some surreptitious scuffing-up on one side of the ball" during the drawn Test between England and India at the Oval two years ago.

"This was quickly snuffed out by umpire Nigel Plews," he adds.

Nagaraj, however, said India would lodge a protest with the Test and County Cricket Board, because it had passed Gower's manuscript before publication.

Gower's book appeared last week during a rumpus over alleged ball-doctoring by Pakistan's bowlers during the recent Test and one-day series in England.

French govt mum over Spassky flouting sanctions

PARIS, Sept 2: The Foreign Ministry declined Wednesday to state whether French citizen Boris Spassky would be prosecuted for playing US chess wizard Bobby Fischer at a Yugoslav resort, reports AP.

The match is viewed by US officials as a violation of United Nations sanctions forbidding commercial acts involving the Yugoslav state that includes Serbia and Montenegro.

In a news conference Tuesday, Fischer spat on a letter from the US Treasury Department warning that he faces possible fines of \$1.5 million and 10 years in prison if he plays.

"No one can ignore the law, and it's obvious that France will make sure international rules are respected," ministry spokesman Daniel Bernard said when asked if a similar fate awaits Spassky.

However, Bernard declined to say whether the French government considered Spassky, a former Soviet who has acquired French citizenship, in violation of the UN sanctions.

The first match was to be played Wednesday at Sveti Stefan, an opulent coastal resort in Montenegro.

Indian jrs to play WC qualifiers

NEW DELHI, Sept 2: Indian hockey juniors will go to Kuala Lumpur to play in the Junior World Cup qualifying tournament with much to prove after hearing calls they cancel the trip because they just were not good enough, reports AFP.

The Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) decided to ignore its vice-president Gufran E-Azam's outburst that the juniors should be pulled out of the tournament starting September 11 and named a 16-member squad Tuesday.

"We considered his views at length," said Raghunandan Prasad, president of the IHF.

But the IHF finally decided the team could not afford to miss the "very important tournament," Prasad said. Coach P

A Raphael however lost his job after Gufran demanded his sacking.

Prasad said the junior coach, who was replaced by ex-Olympian Raj Gopal, himself was so demoralised he told the IHF he did not want the job anymore.

"We hope Raj Gopal will be able to instil confidence and boost the morale of the players," he said.

Gufran said Monday the juniors were "substandard" and were sure to be routed in Kuala Lumpur and asked them to stay home rather than heap further humiliation on Indian hockey.

India, eight time Olympic champions, are still smarting from their debacle in the Barcelona Games where they failed to qualify for the semifinals and matched their worst

ever performance by finishing seventh.

Olympian Harpreet Singh will lead the Indian juniors, placed in Pool B along with Shri Banka, Singapore, South Korea, China and Bangladesh, Pakistan, Malaysia, Japan, Oman, Macau and Taiwan are in Pool A.

The two top teams will qualify for the Junior World Cup to be staged in Terrassa, Spain, next year.

The Indian team: B C Poonacha, Jude Menezes (Goalkeepers), Cornelius D'Costa, Anil Aldrin, Rajinder Singh (Fullbacks), Harpreet Singh, Sandeep Somesh, Adolph Colaco, Sabu Varkey (Halfbacks), Praveen Kumar, Mohammad Riaz, Sarbjot Singh, K T Mohan, Gavin Ferreira, R S Bist, Raju Bagade.

McCarthy wins first gold for US

VALENCIA, Sept 2: Mike McCarthy became the first American ever to win a gold medal in the 5 kilometre professional pursuit at the World Cycling Championships on Tuesday when he beat Briton Shaun Wallace and his wind resistant Lotus superbike, reports AP.

McCarthy was timed in 5 minutes, 45.076 seconds, and Wallace in 5:46.805. Wallace also finished second in last year's World Championships.

McCarthy, who won the amateur world title in pursuit in 1990, advanced to the final by winning his semifinal race over France's Francis Moreau, the defending world champion in the event.

Wallace reached the final by winning over Lithuanian Arturas Kasputis in the semifinals, clocking a time of 5:46.517 to 5:46.869 for Kasputis. Kasputis won the bronze medal by recording a faster semifinal time than Moreau.

The victory in the week-long World Championships marked a major breakthrough for the Americans who had never reached the finals in the pursuit event — much less won it. It was also a letdown for Wallace and the Lotus bike.

The Lotus bike, an aerodynamically designed machine with a carbon-fiber frame and a

rear wheel that is slightly offset, gained wide coverage in the Barcelona Olympics when amateur Chris Boardman rode it to Britain's first cycling gold medal in 72 years. Designers say it gives a rider at least a 10 second advantage over the 5 kilometre (3.1 mile) distance.

"I think a lot of riders were put off by Shaun's bike," said McCarthy of New York City. "I was really happy all the publicity was for Shaun this week — it kind of let me get down to the task at hand."

McCarthy, who held the lead throughout the final, said he hoped the victory would bring him a contract from a major pro team. He was dropped by the Subaru team in 1991 because it was felt he was not good enough to ride in such road events as the Tour de France.

"It has been a difficult year riding without a contract, but everything was pointed to this day. It was worth it," McCarthy added. "Shaun has a fast bike, but it also gets down to only being able to go as fast as the body permits."

Wallace said he rode well in the finals, but admitted he felt some pressure aboard the revolutionary cycle. The bike is produced by Norwich, England based Lotus engineering, better known for its sports cars and racing teams.

"People said it was 10 to 15 seconds faster — they were

telling me they had come to see me win, but it's not quite like that," Wallace said. "The Lotus is the future of speed bicycles, but it's only had six months to develop and the conventional bike has been around 100 years."

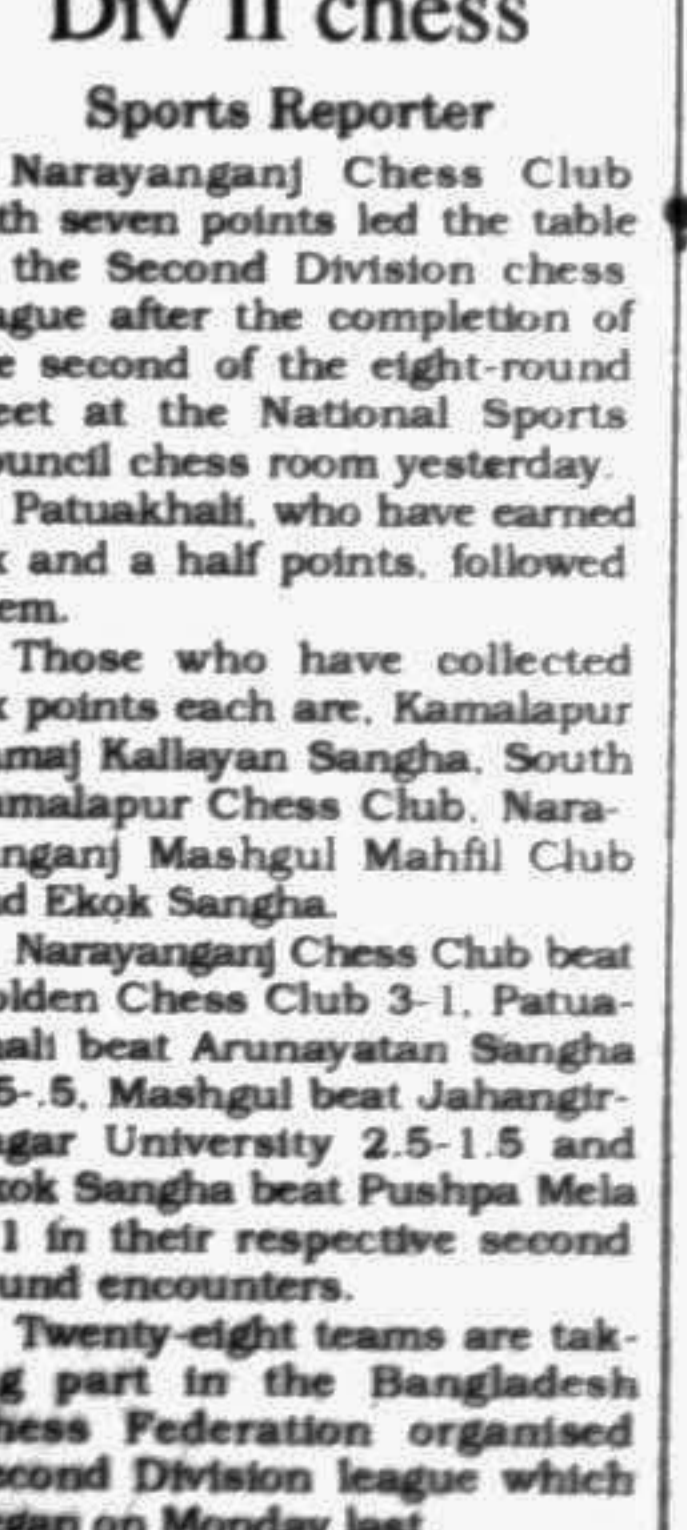
Wallace turned consistently slower times on the bike than Boardman, who set the world's record of 5:38.083 on Aug. 22 in Leicester, England. Wallace attributed the slower times to the new track in Valencia, windy conditions, and his relative inexperience on the cycle.

In pursuit racing, riders start opposite each other on the track. The cyclist with the fastest time wins.

Mexico to revamp national sports structure

MEXICO CITY, Sept 2: Mexico will revamp its national sports structure on the recommendation of a commission formed to evaluate its poor Olympic showing, the Ministry of the Presidency announced on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

President Carlos Salinas de Gortari has decided to apply the recommendations proposed by the evaluating commission and in consequence begin a process of restructuring of sports activity," the ministry said in a statement.



A scene from yesterday's Second Division league play at the NSC chess room. — Star photo