



Some of the proud gold medalists of the four-day national women's swimming championships which concluded at the Dhanmandi Women's Complex pool yesterday. — Star photo

Premier league elites fear hangover after heady continental adventures

LONDON, Oct 2: English champions Leeds United, whose European soccer exit on Wednesday was a classic case of what might have been, are among several British clubs worried about a domestic league hangover this weekend following heady continental adventures, reports Reuter.

Leeds, who almost staged one of the great European Cup comebacks by beating German champions VfB Stuttgart 4-1 on Wednesday, only to go out on the away goal rule, face Ipswich with manager Howard Wilkinson uncertain about the after-effects of a rousing night.

The English team, fired by Frenchman Eric Cantona and Scot Gary McAllister, produced one of their finest performances in recent memory only to be denied by some increasingly panic-stricken German defence.

From my point of view the problems will come on Saturday at Ipswich because night's like Wednesday always have an emotional impact on people," Wilkinson said.

"They did everything that was asked of them and they showed that the quality of the product in this country can be of the highest order.

"They will feel their stomachs are eight-feet deep and the pain is right at the bottom. But eventually they should have less regrets."

Wilkinson's plans to strengthen his team with the proceeds from a good European Cup on Wednesday.

Falkirk will probably recall Forbes Johnston after suspension, and hope to bring back winger Kevin McAllister and goalkeeper Ian Westwater after injury.

Manchester United, equally deflated after their sinking on penalties by Torpedo Moscow on Tuesday, have a potentially awkward trip to Middlesbrough following their retreat from Russia.

Liverpool, perhaps encouraged by their safe Cup Winners' Cup victory over Apollon Limassol seek to remove themselves from the bottom six in the table against Sheffield Wednesday with Welsh striker Ian Rush already predicting better times ahead.

Rush, who needs one more goal to equal the club record of 286, said: "The good times aren't that far away. Even though we've lost games, we haven't been battered by teams. I hope the kids come out of this age better players."

Talking about battered,

Spurs' Scottish Striker Gordon Durie's recent experience will concern all players as they lace up their boots this weekend.

Durie, in hospital for routine knee surgery, suffered a "violent reaction" to the anaesthetic and was reportedly in a serious condition until staff intervened.

Back on the pitch, top-of-the-table Norwich visit third-placed Blackburn in the leading contest in England, but Saturday's most content supporters may well be found in Scotland.

After a great night for Scottish football which saw Rangers, Celtic and Hearts all produce excellent results to reach the second round of their respective European club competitions, the basking trio relatively undemanding contests against Falkirk, Dundee and St Johnstone respectively.

Rangers lead Scottish league

GLASGOW, Oct 2: Glasgow Rangers, four points clear at the top of the Scottish Premier Division, should maintain their advantage at home to Falkirk on Saturday, even though skipper Richard Gough is still sidelined, reports AFP.

The Scotland centre-back is making rapid progress from a groin injury, but not fast enough to warrant a return to action.

In his absence midfielder Stuart McCall continues as an emergency full-back, while winger Dale Gordon should return after being omitted for the 1-0 win over Danish champions Lyngby in the European Cup on Wednesday.

home to St Johnstone. Winger Allan Preston, signed as part of the Crabbie deal with Dundee United, is expected to make his debut.

Saturday's Scottish premier Division programme: Aberdeen vs Dundee United, Dundee vs Celtic, Heart of Midlothian vs Celtic, Heart of Midlothian vs St Johnstone, Motherwell vs Airdrie, Partick vs Hibernian, Rangers vs Falkirk.

Paok president rebukes rowdy fans

ATHENS, Oct 2: Violent Paok Salonika soccer fans who stormed the pitch during a UEFA Cup tie were condemned by the club's president on Friday as "bums who wanted to destroy the team," reports Reuter.

"Paok wrote a black page in its history. Those bums who stormed the field wanted to destroy the team," Thomas Voulinos said.

The Athens newspaper Eleftherotipia declared: "Paok commits suicide and awaits a two-year ban."

At least 10 people were injured and eight arrested when riot police clashed with fans who set seats on fire and stormed the pitch in protest at the Greek team's poor performance in Thursday's tie against Paris St Germain.

The match was abandoned at the end of the first half with Paris leading 2-0. They had won the first leg by the same score.

UEFA is expected to make a ruling in the next few days.

Wiegorst turns down Dundee offer

LONDON, Oct 2: Lyngby midfielder Morten Wiegorst has rejected a 250,000-pound move to Scottish Premier Division side Dundee, reports AFP.

Dundee boss Simon Stainrod watched the 21-year-old in action. For the Danish champions against Glasgow Rangers in the European Cup on Wednesday and was hoping to play him against Celtic on Saturday.

However, Stainrod said: "He promised me a decision, but remained undecided. I asked for a yes or no and he said 'No' for the time being. There is little chance of things being re-arranged now."

Republic of Ireland goalkeeper Pat Bonner returns for Gordon Marshall, but former Scotland centre-back Gary Gillespie, dropped in favour of Mike Galloway, may struggle to regain his place.

Aberdeen will face new Dundee United striker Scott Crabbie, signed for 215,000 pounds from Hearts. He makes his debut alongside Duncan Ferguson, who returns from suspension.

Aberdeen will be without captain Alex McLeish, who has pulled a hamstring, but their Dutch goalkeeper, Theo Snelders, is expected to return.

Hearts, who beat Slavia Prague 4-2 in the UEFA Cup in midweek, hope for a spin-off at

Maradona deal finalised

MADRID, Oct 2: The transfer of Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona from Napoli of Italy to Sevilla was formally completed on Thursday and he will be free to play in a league match this weekend, Spanish Soccer Federation officials said, reports Reuter.

The Italian Soccer Federation completed the transfer paperwork by sending on an international pass allowing Maradona to play in Spain and for a Spanish club in international championships.

Maradona played his first soccer for 18 months in a friendly against Bayern Munich on Monday after a worldwide ban for cocaine abuse. He said he would like to make his club debut on Sunday against Athletic Bilbao.

But Carlos Bilardo and champion Luis Cuervas were not so sure.

"If he is not ready to play from the first minute he will not go to Bilbao," Bilardo said.

Cuervas favours Maradona playing his first match against Real Zaragoza at home next Wednesday.

Gazza named in England squad

LONDON, Oct 2: Lazio's Paul Gascoigne is back in the England squad for their World Cup qualifying match against Norway at Wembley on October 14, reports AFP.

The midfielder, who played his first competitive match in the Italian League last weekend after an 18-month layoff because of a serious knee injury, was included in the 22-man squad picked by Graham Taylor.

Gascoigne is one of three Serie A players on the side, along with Juventus' David Platt and Sampdoria's Des Walker.



Brazilian soccer star Pele poses with children at a football school in Istanbul on Thursday. The former soccer player is in Turkey on a promotion tour. — AFP photo

Vishwanath & co get pat on the back



NEW DELHI, Oct 2: Indian cricket selectors have done the impossible by naming a team for the historic African tour that the press said with one voice was the best anyone could have assembled, reports AFP.

Former Test batsman Gundappa Vishwanath and his four deputies on the newly-formed selection committee won unanimous praise from newspapers today for going by the book and springing no surprises.

The 16-member squad Mohammad Azharuddin will lead to Zimbabwe and South Africa is a "fine blend of youth and experience". The Hindustan Times said and gave the selectors a "pat on the back".

The Pioneer said the selectors, often dismissed as a bunch of jokers, had walked the "tightrope rather surefootedly" and the Hindu wrote they could not have done a better job.

The selection of the national cricket team is one of the most difficult jobs in India, and has been accompanied by controversy ever since the Maharaja of Vizianagaram with a batting average of less than one was named skipper in 1936.

He led the team to England and his singular distinction was to travel with dozens of pieces of luggage and two servants. A letter-writer to the Times of India called it "The biggest catastrophe since the Bengal famine".

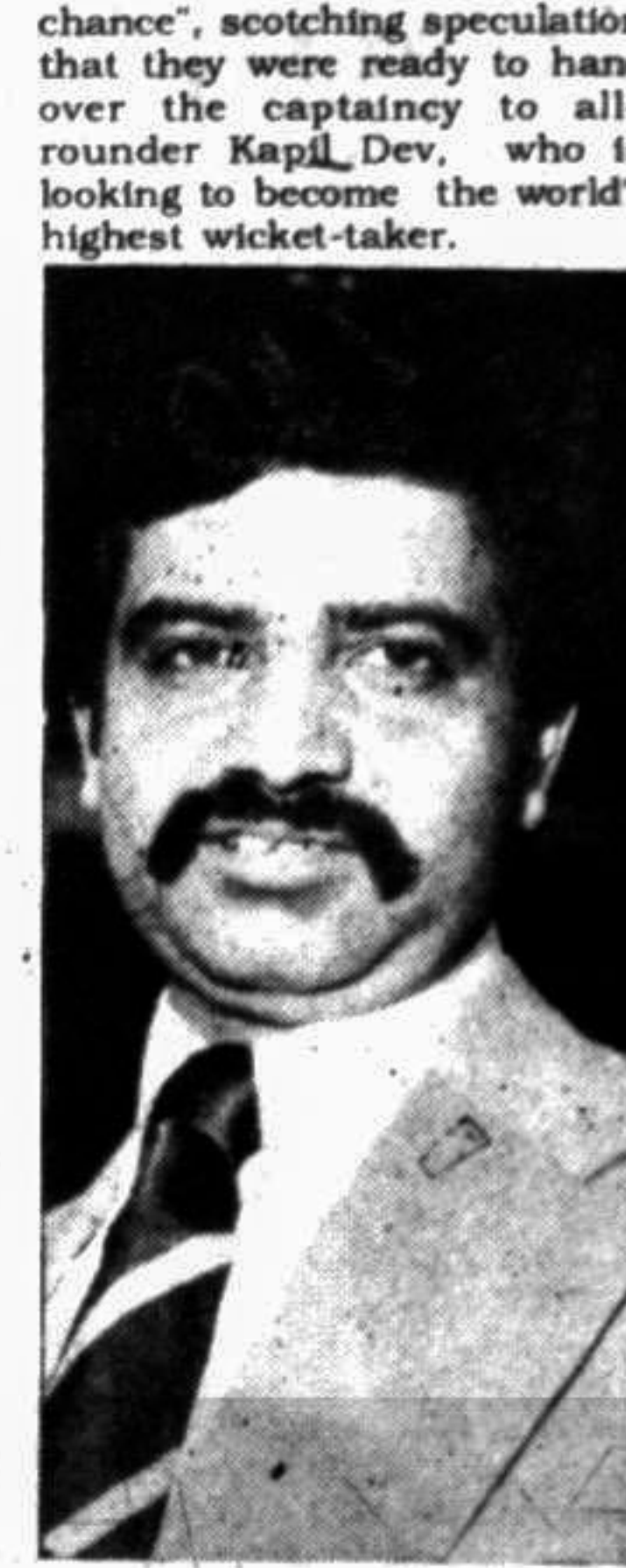
Infighting, factionalism and intrigue have been rampant with selectors usually pushing for the inclusion of their own candidates and coming up with some inexplicable combinations.

Few, however, could find fault with Vishwanath and his colleagues, who Thursday overcame regional pulls and pressure in naming a balanced team with continuity and caution as the watchword for the grinding 85-day tour.

The team that leaves October 14 will be the first in 22 years to tour South Africa, who are returning to the Test arena from apartheid-induced sporting isolation, and Zimbabwe will be making their Test debut.

Azharuddin kept his job as skippers despite his sorry record of losing six of the 123 Tests he has led the team in, his brilliance as a batsman despite the pressure of captaincy counting in his favour.

Vishwanath said the selectors wanted to give him a "fair



VISHWANATH
The rest of the squad, including the only face Vijay Ya-

chance", scotching speculation that they were ready to hand over the captaincy to all-rounder Kapil Dev, who is looking to become the world's highest wicket-taker.

Leg-spinner Ali Kumble, 22, forced his way into the squad with 13 wickets in a trial match here this week.

Chetan Sharma, who last played for India in 1989, returns as a member of the five-man pace attack Kapil replaced, opens Navjot Sidhu and Krish Srikanth, leg-spinner Narendra Hirwani and southpaw batsman Sourav Ganguly.

No tears were shed for the five casualties of the 0-4 rout by Australia last year — Chandrakant Pandit whom Yadav replaced, opens Navjot Sidhu and Krish Srikanth, leg-spinner Narendra Hirwani and southpaw batsman Sourav Ganguly.

Pressure of national expectations will be immense on the team, which will be out to improve upon India's sorry record of not winning a Test overseas in six years. Vishwanath said he was confident.

"It is a team with promise and potential. I expect a good performance from them on tour," the chairman of selectors said.

Six-a-side : Heresy or revelation?



HONG KONG, Oct 2: Cricket will extend its boundaries once again when the inaugural World Sixes tournament gets underway here this weekend, reports AFP.

Hong Kong, famous for staging the world renowned Rugby Sevens, will now play

host to past and present stars of international cricket from eight of the nine Test playing nations.

The tournament is the brainchild of two men, English cricket. Lover Brian Catton and Indian businessman Papu Butani, who wanted to see Hong Kong once more take the lead in turning a staid sport which originated in England into a non-stop action spectacular.

World limited over champions Pakistan lead the way by sending a team packed with their elite, including fearsome pace men Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis and captain Javed Miandad.

India, New Zealand, West Indies, Sri Lanka and recent additions to the Test fraternity Zimbabwe have followed in the footsteps of Pakistan by sending strong squads comprising the cream of their crop.

Only England and Australia

have restrained themselves from sending current Test players. This is because the top players are contracted to their respective boards which forbid them to play elsewhere before a Test series.

England will be touring India and Sri Lanka in January while Australia will soon host the West Indies.

The only notable absentees are the South Africans. They pulled out of the tournament due to the pressures of the Currie Cup season, leaving room for Zimbabwe's inclusion.

Organisers Cricket World International are, however, pleased that they have got such a good attendance on their first attempt.

Even the Rugby Sevens took time before it found its feet to be accepted now as the premier tournament of its kind in the world.

Like Sevens Rugby, the

Sixes cricket will be non-stop action, made to measure for television and spectators thirsting for instant drama.

The MCC laws of cricket will generally apply. But the variations are numerous.

Among the new rules are: Each side will bat for five overs; a wide shall count as four runs and an extra ball will be bowled; a batsman must retire on scoring 31 runs; if five wickets fall, the least batsman will bat on.

For the Purist's palate, this bag of laws in tantamount to heresy.

But despite the changes, the participants will be taking it all seriously especially with a purse of 10,000 pounds awaiting the winner Sunday.

Pakistan have been named top seeds and will play in a preliminary group comprising Australia and hosts Hong Kong. The other groups are New Zealand, India, Zimbabwe, and West Indies, England and Sri Lanka.

The top two teams in each group will qualify for the final round.

Lakers lavish record sum on Magic

INGLEWOOD, California, Oct 2: Magic Johnson and the Los Angeles Lakers agreed a contract extension here Thursday worth a reported 14.6 million dollars — a record sum for a one-year deal in US team sports, reports AFP.

The 33-year-old player, who "retired" last November 7 after testing positive for the HIV virus that causes AIDS but who played on the United States team that won the gold medal at the Barcelona Olympics, announced Tuesday he was returning to the National Basketball Association club.

He was already under contract for the 1992-93 season and for the following season at 2.5 million dollars a year.

The contract extension reportedly guarantees Johnson 19.6 million dollars through the end of the 1994-95 season.

Lakers general manager Jerry West said that the club had planned to extend Johnson's contract through 1994-95, even if he did not play again.

"This extension is something that club owner Jerry Buss said he would do long ago, but Earvin did not want to announce it until after he made his decision were their or not to play," West said.

"The extension has nothing to do with Tuesday's announcement and is something that we were going to do even if he did not back to play."

Johnson said he expects to play between 50 and 60 games for the Lakers this season, out of 82 on the schedule.

"It's time to go back to work," he said Tuesday in announcing his comeback. "It is time to have some fun. I think the positives outweigh all the risks."

The Lakers are scheduled to start their pre-season preparations in Hawaii next week. They open November 6 against the Los Angeles Clippers.

Duran's successful comeback

BUFFALO, NY, Oct 2: Roberto Duran fed a steady diet of left jabs to Tony Biglen to win his first fight in 18 1/2 months, reports AP.

Duran scored two knockdowns on Wednesday before a crowd of about 2,500 in Memorial Auditorium, a building that holds about 18,000.

The fans obviously came to cheer the former holder of four world titles and they did for most of the fight. There were boos in the late rounds when it became apparent that Duran, 41, wouldn't win by knockout. But the Panamanian never seemed to really try for a KO in the second half of the fight.

Judges Andy Heymann, Donald Noddecker and Joe Ware each scored it 100-86 for Duran.

Duran appeared pleased with the victory. He said he was very hurt when he was roundly booed after being stopped in the sixth round by Pat Lawler in his last previous match on March 18, 1991. Duran aggravated a left shoulder injury in that fight, but the fans thought he had quit after six rounds.

For his return, Duran obviously kept his diet in check. There was no roll about his middle as there had been in some previous fights, and his official weight was 166 1/2 pounds (75 kg), 1 1/2 (2/3 KO) under the limit for the super middleweight division in

which he will campaign in the future.

Duran knocked the 31-year-old Biglen, 160 1/2 pounds (73 kg), down in the first round with a right hand that caught the journeyman electrician going backwards and off balance.

There was nothing flashy about the second knockdown, however, which came with a minute gone in the fourth round, when Duran nailed Biglen with a short left hook to the jaw. Biglen got up at seven and lasted the round, although he was sent reeling by a right hand.

During the round, while Duran had Biglen pinned in Biglen's corner, Duran struck his head through the ropes and shook his head "No" to Biglen's father-trainer, who was shouting instructions to his son.

From the fourth round on, Duran seemed content to jab while landing an occasional hook to the body and head. Biglen, for his part, offered little resistance, spending most of the fight backing away and circling.

It was difficult to tell from this fight, Duran's 96th, just what the aging "Hands of Stone", has left.

Duran, who has 87 wins, 60 by knockout, says he wants to get a title shot at Iran Barkley, the World Boxing Council super middleweight champion Duran beat on a split decision for the WBC middleweight title in 1989.

TEAMS

Australia: David Hookes, Graeme Wood, Greg Ritchie, Geoff Lawson, James Pyke, Don Connor.

England: Derek Randall, Phil Newport, Chris Broad, Matthew Maynard, Nick Speak, Tim Munton, Martin Bicknell.

India: Kapil Deve, Ravi Shastri, Maninder Singh, Manoj Prabhakar, Chetan Sharma, Ajay Jadeja, Vinod Kambli.

New Zealand: Martin Crowe, Ken Rutherford, Gavin Larsen, Rod Latham, Andrew Jones, Chris Harris, Adam Parore.

Pakistan: Javed Miandad, Waqar Younis, Aamir Sohail, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Wasim Akram, Salim Malik.

Sri Lanka: Arjuna Ranatunga, Aravinda de Silva, Asoka de Silva, Asanka Gurusinha, Champaka Ramanayake, Ruwan Kalpage, Nishantha Ranatunga.

West Indies: Viv Richards, Carl Hooper, Roger Harper, Gus Logie, Franklyn Stephenson, Jeffrey Dujon, Phil Simmons.

Zimbabwe: David Houghton, Craig Evans, Andrew Flower, Grant Flower, Eddo Brandes, Ali Omar Shah, Andrew Walker.

Hong Kong: Patrik Fordham, Stewart Brew, Steve Foster, Steve Atkinson, Ross Greer, David Crowe, Leigh Beaman.

Fischer-Spassky 13th game on

BELGRADE, Oct 2: Former world chess champions Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky used a Sicilian defence on Thursday to start the 13th game in their controversial 5 million dollar chess series in Belgrade, reports Reuter.

Fischer, 40, started with a 5-3 lead over Spassky from a series which began earlier this month at Sveti Stefan, an island resort off the Adriatic coast of the small Yugoslav state of Montenegro.

Fischer lost the opening game of the second leg, which began in Belgrade on Wednesday.

The two resumed their match in a big Belgrade theatre sealed off behind a glass screen from several hundred onlookers seated in the auditorium.

The first player to score 10 points, draws not being counted, will win 3.5 million dollars and the loser is entitled to 1.5 million dollar.



American chess Grandmaster Bobby Fischer asks officials to have journalists removed at the start of the 13th game with Boris Spassky in Belgrade on Thursday. Spassky won the 12th game. — AFP photo