

MSC-BU semis from today

Sports Reporter

The second semifinal of the Victory Day cricket tournament begins today at 9.15 am at the Dhaka Stadium with Dhaka Mohammedan Sporting Club taking on Brothers Union. Each side will play a maximum of 75 overs with the match spread over two days.

Abahani Krira Chakra, the reigning champions, had earlier marched to the final with huge 209 victory against the Greater Mymensingh Cricket Club (GMCC).

This year's Damal champions batted first to pile up a

massive 395 for five with Akram Khan and Ziauddin Ahmed Shovon notching up two hundreds. Akram scored an unbeaten 107 while Shovon rode his luck to score a fortuitous 128. GMCC were all out for 186 in their turn with Indian opener Raman Lamba making 43. Tight fielding and accurate spin bowling led to the anticlimactic collapse of GMCC.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) has announced the rate of tickets for the match. VIP, Gate No 1 tickets will cost Taka 50 each, Gate 3A Taka 20 and 3B Taka 10 while the rate

of the gallery tickets has been fixed at Taka 5.

The final of the tournament — a two-day affair with each side playing 75 overs — will be played on December 30 and 31.

PLAYERS PARDONED

Meanwhile, the BCCB has absolved two cricketers of Khilgaon Government High School following their appeal for mercy to the board. Imtiaz and Mamunur Rashid had illegally taken part for Khilgaon Government High School in the tenth Nirman schools cricket championship.

Dhanmondi left in the cold

Sports Reporter

A beautifully paced innings of 57 off 60 balls by Gautam proved invaluable in the end when City Club registered a 31-run victory against Dhanmondi Club in the Milnars First Division cricket league at the Dhanmondi Cricket Stadium yesterday.

Put into bat by Dhanmondi captain Babar, City collected 192 for five wickets from the possible 42 overs out of the stipulated 45 and then restricted Dhanmondi to 161.

Former national cricketer Samtur Rahman, who is one of the few oldies harboured in Dhanmondi this year, gave his side an encouraging start in the seventh over of the match when Dulu caught City opener Ujjal off the robust medium pacer for two.

Tinku, the other opener, then teamed up with one drop Monti to take the score to 86 from 23 overs. Both these batsmen, however, left in quick succession with the opener falling for 43 made with the help of six boundaries

and Monti for a sedate 37, inclusive off two hits to the fence.

Meanwhile, Gautam had arrived at the wicket and with wicketkeeper Zakir around as the new entrant after the fall of Monti's wicket, the top scorer of the City innings braced himself to the challenging task ahead.

He hit the ball with *elan*, never forgetting the singles for a moment. The number four batsman sent the ball across the fence on three occasions and hoisted it over for two mighty sixes. When overs ran out Gautam was still unconquered at the wicket with a priceless 57 runs to his name.

Although Zakir could not trigger off any fireworks like his senior partner at the wicket he worked the ball around for a useful 21 off 32 balls and together they put on 77 runs for the fourth wicket. City finally raised 192 for five wickets from 42 overs.

Mithu, who joined Dhanmondi from Mohammedans only this year, bagged two wickets for 29 runs. Soheli, however, proved to be the

most economical off all the six bowlers used by the Dhanmondi skipper. He bowled nine overs giving away 19 runs for his one wicket.

Bappi upset the Dhanmondi apple cart early on when he sent back Sumon and Dulu cheaply with the total on 26. Shri Lankan Rajkumara and Belayet Hossain Belal, the burly veteran, then halted the slide for some time.

With opener Adil gone at 53 for a patient 22, the fourth-wicket partnership advanced to 83 before Rajkumara left for 26 stumped by Kamru off Ujjal. Belal fell with the addition of just one run and a possibility of Dhanmondi victory vanished.

Skipper Babar hung around for some time to score 23 before Dhanmondi were finally stranded at 161 for nine wickets.

Ujjal, the City opener, who failed with the bat showed fine work of fingers to finish with three for 29. Then there was Bappi, the new ball bowler who opened up the Dhanmondi batting, with two for 15. Sujan also took two wickets while Tinku and Al Amin bagged one apiece.

Indians struggle to 197 for 8

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa, Dec 26: South Africa's fast bowling wreaked havoc in India's first innings Saturday, leaving the visitors on 197 for eight after 90 overs on the first day of the third cricket Test, reports AP.

Allan Donald seized four wickets yielding only 50 runs in 24 overs for South Africa on a warm day and lively pitch. Brian McMillan grabbed three wickets for 41 runs in his 20 overs.

Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin led the batting with 60; while the rest of the wickets tumbled to the South African attack.

Sanjay Manjrekar tallied 23 and Woorkeri Raman 22 for India, who lost the series of seven one-day internationals to South Africa by a 5-2 margin on India's first-ever tour of South Africa.

Two previous Tests on the tour, the first between the nations, ended in draws because of rain.

India has been criticised for indifferent play during the tour, but Azharuddin said the final two Tests would determine the visitors' success.

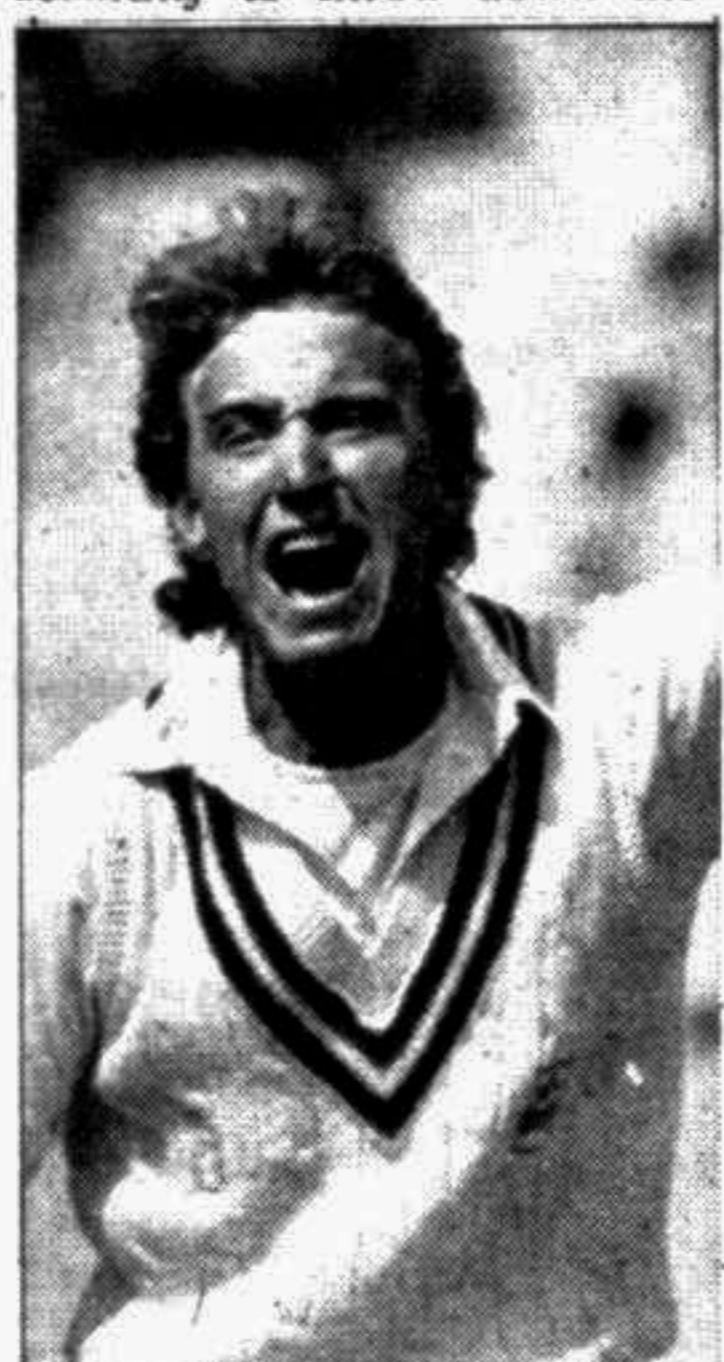
But Saturday's opening batting by India was weak and unsure, while South Africa batted confidently in the one-day series that ended last week.

South Africa returned to international cricket last year after being banned for two decades because of apartheid.

Skipper Mohammad Azharuddin, who made 60, cashed in on a double escape to keep India's batting afloat.

Azharuddin, dropped on eight, was 37 not out at tea with his team 118 for four.

The captain, thinking he had been caught behind, was on his way back to the pavilion as wicketkeeper Dave Richardson attempted unsuccessfully to throw down the



A DONALD ... 4 for 50

stumps after spilling the catch. It was a moment of excitement after a desperately slow first session with India crawling to 43 for one at lunch.

Allan Donald and Brian McMillan took two wickets each before tea. McMillan made the breakthrough, having Ravi Shastri (10) caught at gully by Omar Henry who also held the catch that saw off Sanjay Manjrekar for 23.

In between, Donald claimed Woorkeri Raman seventh ball after lunch for 21 and Sachin Tendulkar for six. Both were caught by wicketkeeper Richardson.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the first day of the third cricket Test between South Africa and India today:

INDIA: First Innings			
R Shastri c Henry b McMillan	10		
W Raman c Richardson b Donald	21		
S Manjrekar c Henry b McMillan	23		
S Tendulkar c Richardson b Donald	6		
M Azharuddin c Richardson b Donald	60		
P Amre c McMillan b Donald	11		

BSJA's AGM today

The annual general meeting of the Bangladesh Sports Journalists' Association (BSJA) will be held at the office of the association today at 11 am, reports BSS.

All members and officials of the association have been requested to attend the meeting.



Mark Waugh of Australia evades a lifter from West Indian pacesman Curtly Ambrose on the first day of the second Test between West Indies and Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday. Waugh scored a defiant 63 as the Aussies made 227 for four at stumps.

— AFP photo

Border steadies Aussie innings

MELBOURNE, Dec 26: A fine half century from captain Allan Border helped steady Australia out of trouble to 227 for four wickets at the close on the first day of the second Test against the West Indies today, reports Reuter.

Border came aggressively to the crease with his side on 115 for four wickets on a dry, easy-paced wicket to demonstrate to his teammates that runs were there for the taking. He hit one six in his undefeated 51 and in partnership with Mark Waugh (63 not out), received a standing ovation from the 50,000 Melbourne Cricket Ground crowd.

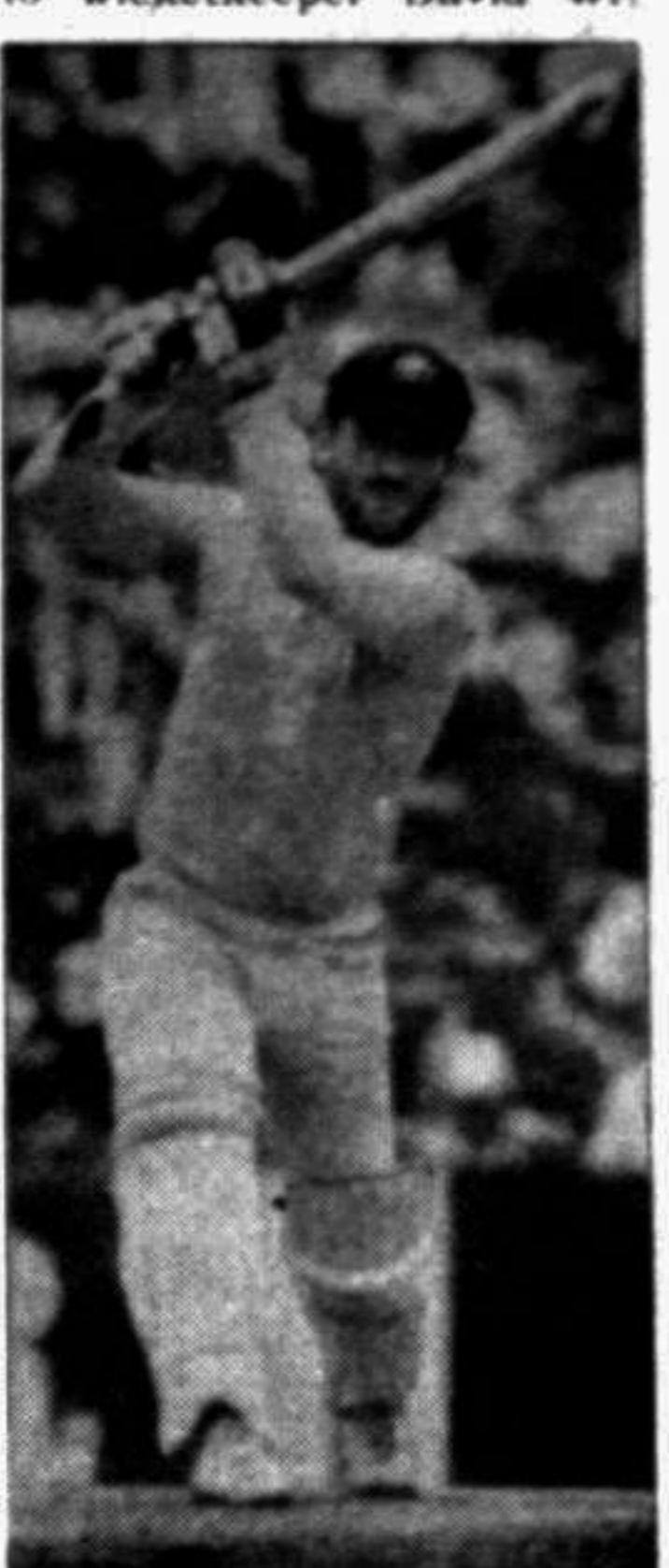
Curtly Ambrose, after early rhythm trouble, was the Windies' best bowler, at one stage taking two wickets for 10 runs off 13 overs.

He ended with two for 29 runs of 20 overs. Earlier, with Australia in trouble after winning the toss and electing to bat, Windies captain Richie Richardson prepared for a possible early innings by leaving the field for high strain treatment.

Desmond Haynes took over as skipper and 12th man Gus Logie took to the field. The wickets to fall today were openers Mark Taylor (13) and David Boon (46), Steve Waugh (38) and Damien Martyn (7) leaving Australia on a fragile 132 for four wickets at tea.

Taylor was first victim of the day, nicking a catch to Brian Lara at first slip when trying to cut Courtney Walsh. It

was Walsh's 50th Australian wicket. Waugh was next to go, edging Ambrose to Lara, and then Boon lobbed an attempted cut to wicketkeeper David Wi-



A R BORDER ... 51 not out

lliams off Walsh.

Martyn went when he popped a rising ball to Phil Simmons at gully off Ambrose.

The West Indies gambled by selecting three instead of their usual four pacemen — Ian Bishop, Ambrose and Walsh, plus medium pacer Phil

Simmons. Pacesman Patrick Patterson was replaced by batsman and spin bowler Jimmy Adams in the only change to the first Test squad.

Bishop, vaunted as one of the world's fastest pacemen, was a disappointment due to problems with his runup. He was hit for 53 runs off 17 overs.

Walsh finished with two wickets for 53 runs off 24 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the opening day of the second cricket Test between Australia and the West Indies at the Melbourne Cricket Ground today:

AUSTRALIA: First Innings			
M Taylor c Lara b Walsh	13		
D Boon c Williams b Walsh	46		
S Waugh c Lara b Ambrose	38		
M Waugh not out	63		
D Martyn c Simmons b Ambrose	7		
A Border not out	51		
Extras: (7 lb, 1 nb, 1 w)	9		
Total: (for four wickets)	227		
To bat: G Matthews, I Healy, M Hughes, C McDermott, S Warne.			

Fall of wickets: 1-38, 2-100, 3-104, 4-115

Bowling			
C Ambrose	20	9	29
I Bishop	17	1	53
C Walsh	24	8	53
C Hooper	19	3	49
J Adams	2	0	13
P Simmons	10	2	23

WEST INDIES: Richie Richardson, Desmond Haynes, Phil Simmons, Brian Lara, Keith Arthurton, David Williams, Ian Bishop, Jimmy Adams, Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Carl Hooper, 12th man: Gus Logie.

Beckenbauer's view

HAMBURG, Dec 26: Franz Beckenbauer, who coached Germany to the World Cup title in 1990, says defending champions should not automatically qualify for the final round in future tournaments, reports AP.

In a story for the Welt am Sonntag newspaper released Saturday in advance of its publication Sunday, Beckenbauer said automatic qualification was an honour given to the world champion.

"But during four years, a team goes through fundamental changes," Beckenbauer said. "I think it would be a good thing if the defending champion is not given a bye."

"This raises the danger that the world champion is unable to defend its title, but a team unable to gain qualification does not deserve to play in the elite final round."

Under the current procedure, the defending champions and the host team are given automatic berths in the 24-team final round, while other countries attempt to qualify in regional competitions over a two-year period.

Beckenbauer said the coach of the defending champions is spared the tension of qualify-

ing but also ends up with a team untested in real competition.

"When the tournament begins, the coach doesn't know



FRANZ BECKENBAUER the real performance level of his team," he said.

Beckenbauer resigned as coach of the German national team after winning the 1990 World Cup in Italy and was succeeded by Bert Vogts, whose contract includes the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

S Bima crush Evergreen

Sports Reporter

Sadharan Bima Kirira Sangatha outplayed Evergreen Club by seven wickets in the Milnars First Division cricket league at the Mirpur Pallabi cricket ground yesterday.

On a chilly morning Ratan proved to be the bane of the Evergreen batsmen dismissing three top order batsmen. Evergreen, who were asked to bat, struggled all along to muster a two-bit 95 from 31.2 overs.

A fighting 40-by Momin failed to stem the rot. Momin played 57 balls and struck six boundaries. Munna and Liton with 12 and 15 respectively were the other notable scorers.

Ratan, the veteran left-arm pacesman with a highly suspect action, bagged three wickets for 22 runs. David bagged two for 13. Nakib, Babu and Halim Babu were the other wicket takers claiming a wicket apiece.

A sensible 37 by opener

Kiron ruled out any chance of Bima hiccuping that might have arisen from the early dismissal of Shaheen.

Indian movie stars to play in Sharjah

ABU DHABI, Dec 26: Famous Indian actors will exchange glittering costumes for white flannels when they play in the "Star vs Star" cricket match in Sharjah on Jan 15, it was announced Saturday, reports AP.

The organisers said 22 Indian stars confirmed they would participate. They said those included Dilip Kumar, Raj Babbar, Sharukh Khan, Mithun Chakraborty, Aditya Panchohi, Anupam Khor, Shashi Kapoor, Randhir Kapoor, Amrita Singh, Renua Roy, Bhagyashree and Farah.

There are thousands of Indians and Pakistanis living in the United Arab Emirates.

Two more wickets were lost — Jewel for 19 and Kiron who played 65 balls including four hits to the fence — before Bima scored 96 for the loss of three wickets in 29.5 overs to take home a cosy 7-wicket win.

Afzal was the pick of the Evergreen bowlers with figures of one for 26. Azim and Momin picked up one wicket apiece off the losers.

TODAY'S MATCH

Agrani Bank vs Latifia Club (Mirpur Pallabi)

Sadek Hossain off to Malaysia

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain left Dhaka yesterday on a week-long official visit to Malaysia, reports BSS.

The State Minister will lead a three-member delegation during the visit. The delegation includes Secretary, Ministry of Youth and Sports M Azizul Haq.

1992: AC Milan transcends from the real to ideal

PARIS, Dec 25: Whether or not AC Milan are the world's greatest team is no longer an issue. The question now is whether the team epitomised by the brilliance of Marco Van Basten is the best the world has ever seen reports AFP.

On the evidence of 1992, the answer is probably yes. They won the Italian championship at a stroll and by the end of the year their unbeaten run in the world's strongest league had reached a record 48 matches.

Eight points clear in the league, this season's European Cup looks equally sown up. So crushing has been their superiority in their semifinal pool that UEFA is rethinking the format to give other teams more chance.

Silvio Berlusconi's millions have allowed Milan to buy the best. Even after the championship triumph in May, he was prepared to shell out more than 300 million dollars to add Jean Pierre Papin and Gianluigi Lentini to his extravagantly-talented squad.

But there is more to the Milan dream team than the depth of Berlusconi's pockets. First under Alfio Saachi, who left to make over Italy, and now Fabio Capello, the club has distilled the essence of most successful styles in European football from the last two decades.

Mixed liberally with the outstanding individual skills typified by Van Basten, voted European player-of-the-year for the third time in five years, the Milanese finishing school has produced an irresistible cocktail of beauty and strength.

Inevitably, with the Dutch trio of Van Basten, Frank Rijkaard and Ruud Gullit, the side has the effortless flexibility that typified the great Ajax Amsterdam and Holland teams of the seventies.

That typically Dutch technique has been blended with a 'pressing' style that owes much to the method Liverpool used to nominate Europe in the late

seventies and early eighties. Even Van Basten is expected to tirelessly run and harry defenders into mistakes for the benefit of the team.

And as with Liverpool at their peak, Milan know that staying at the top requires ruthlessness.

Gullit made Milan tick in the late eighties but that will count for nothing when his contract expires in May and the sings are the dreadlocked star will be looking for a new club. Papin came to Milan as the 1991 European player-of-the-year but Capello hasn't hesitated to leave him in the stand.

With the Milan three, Barcelona's Ronald Keeman and Ajax's Dennis Bergkamp to call on, Holland started as the June European Championship favourites.

But, not for the first time, in-fighting and arrogance cost the Dutch dear as Denmark pulled off a triumph that could have come straight from a Hans Christina Anderson fairy-tale.

The Danes shouldn't even have been in Sweden. Their veteran coach Richard Moller Neilsen was contemplating a summer building a kitchen for his wife and his players were mostly headed for the beach when UN sanctions forced UEFA call Denmark as a substitute for excluded Yugoslavia.

And when their best player, Barcelona's Michael Laudrup, declined to interrupt his holiday plans, the Danes looked like just making up the numbers.

A group win over France and a draw with England earned a semi-final place, and that's when the Dutch put their foot in it. Confident of victory some of their players reportedly offered to buy the Danes tickets for the final off them.

Moller Neilsen hardly needed a team talk after that and his side ran their hearts out to earn a 2-2 draw and the chance for fortune to smile on the brave in the lottery of a penalty shoot out.

By the final, the red and white steamroller was unstoppable and the world champions Germany surrendered meekly as the heroic Vikings secured their nation's greatest sporting triumph.

Unlike fairytales, live is not happy-ever-after and by the end of the year the Danes were in severe danger of not qualifying for the 1994 World Cup.

In that they were in good company. In Group Six, headed by Sweden, France were struggling after a defeat by Bulgaria.

Italy had to go to Malta and scrape a 2-1 victory for their first win in three games in group One. With Switzerland heading the group after a great

chances of reaching a sixth consecutive finals.

In Group Three, Norway's win over Holland in Oslo and a draw with England at Wembley will make it difficult for both the English and Dutch to go through.

The Dutch were weakened by Gullit's refusal to play for the national team in the opening qualifiers. Whatever the problem was, it was resolved and Gullit ended an unhappy year with a superb scoring comeback in Holland's 3-1 win over Turkey in December.

His international revival increased the chances of him staying in Europe after his Milan contract expires. Real

from guiding Marseille to a fourth consecutive French title to the ignominy of the substitutes, Benmchj. But for him too, the year ended with the promise of a two month run in the first team after an injury to Van Basten.

It was also mixed 1992 for the brilliant Argentinian Diego Maradona. At least the world can see him play again. After a 15 month ban for cocaine use ended in the summer, he finally freed himself from Napoli and moved to Sevilla where he has helped revive the southern Spanish club's fortunes.

The downside is that the wrangling over the transfer looks set to drag on through



AC Milan's fearsome Dutch threesome: From left: Frank Rijkaard, Marco van Basten and the redoubtable Ruud Gullit.

— Star file photo

start and Portugal also looking impressive. The 1982 world champions could struggle to make the trip to the United States.

In the same group, Scotland are still without a win and seem to have blown their

Madrid are favourites to sign him although Gullit has admitted a fascination with Japanese culture that might still take him to the new league there.

The Dutch man was not the only fallen star in 1992. His new clubmate, Papin, went

1993 and might ultimately get in the way of his planned international return. Alternatively it could all be resolved by March and a fit again Maradona could start concentrating on the final bow he dreams of taking at the World

He took over at a time of increasing holiganism among spectators and falling attendances at games. Croker developed sponsorship, and the Football Association's annual turnover rose six fold to 9 million pounds (then dls 18 million) while he was secretary.