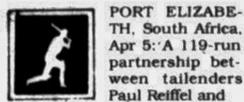


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PHILIPS

Aussies so near yet so far



PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa, Apr 5: A 119-run partnership between tailenders Paul Reiffel and Shane Warne only narrowly failed to turn a remarkable recovery into victory as South Africa beat Australia by 26 runs in a one-day international on Monday, reports Reuter.

Simpson lodged an official complaint over the lighting with the umpires and match referee Donald Carr.

Battersby later described the lighting as "less than optimal and clearly inadequate." The complaint was made during the break between innings and Carr said the decision on whether play was possible would be left to the two local umpires. They decided it was, despite six of the 30 lamps one of the two major pylons being broken.

South Africa's total half earlier been built around a third wicket stand of 105 between Andrew Hudson (63) and Jonty Rhodes (66). Australian captain Allan Border refused to be drawn over the inadequate lighting, saying only the early collapse had been "embarrassing." But he paid warm tribute to both Warne and Reiffel. "They chanced their arm brilliantly and gave us a sniff of victory towards the end. But their luck ran out and we have to accept that the top order lost it for us."

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the second day-night international between South Africa and Australia on Monday:

Table with columns for South Africa and Australia, listing players and runs scored.

Richardson not out 2 Extras: (lb-17; w-5, nb-2): 26 Total: (for six wickets, 50 overs) 227

Fall of wickets: 1-18; 2-48; 3-153; 4-175; 5-216; 6-223. Did not bat: T Shaw, C Matthews, De Villiers.

Bowling table with columns for O, M, R, W and names of bowlers like McGrath, Reiffel, M Waugh, S Waugh, May, Warne.

Table with columns for O, M, R, W and names of bowlers like Slater, Richardson, B Matthews, Boon, Wessels, De Villiers, Jones, Simons, M Waugh, S Waugh, Border, McMillan, Healy, Wessels, Shaw, Reiffel, Simons, Matthews, Warne, run out, May, c and b De Villiers, McGrath, not out, Extras: (lb-13; w-4) 17.

Maradona yet to make up his mind

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 5: Diego Maradona was expected to announce later on Tuesday he would not play in the World Cup finals for Argentina, reports AFP.

He said recently he was saturated by football and did not believe he could get fit in time for the finals which start in June.

He was expected to make an announcement later on Tuesday. National coach Alfio Basile said last week he had as good as written Maradona out of his plans.

However, he hoped Claudio Caniggia would be fit in time. Caniggia, who provided almost all of Argentina's scoring potential in the 1990 World Cup, finishes a suspension for cocaine use next month.

He is due to play for his club as Roma against River Plate in Buenos Aires on May 9. Napoli and local side Independiente are the other teams in the tournament.

Maradona, whose international career was effectively finished by a 15-month suspension for cocaine use, came back to help Argentina beat Australia in a World Cup play-off.

But the 33-year-old has not played since being sacked by his last club Newell's Old Boys last December.

Half-baked prep for Lions?



YAOUNDE, Apr 5: Cameroon's national soccer team began serious training for the World Cup finals on Monday, hampered by lack of funds and bitter political infighting, reports Reuter.

The players called together for Monday's training session had to make do without basic necessities including bottled mineral water, while the media blasted the bureaucratic bickering that has left the squad broke before it sets foot abroad.

"Half-baked Preparations for Lions" was the headline of a story in the government-controlled Tribune newspaper's weekly English-language edition.

The squad has to go without water and other basic necessities that go with training for such a major event," it went on in reference to mineral water which is safer than drinking local tap-water.

It is not the first time the Indomitable Lions have been broke. During the 1990 World

Cup the team repeatedly ran out of money because funds arrived too late or not at all.

Last October the Lions, threatened to go on strike, 48 hours before the World Cup qualifier against Zimbabwe.

The problem stems from rivalry between the Sports Ministry, the Cameroonian Football Federation, a 45-member special committee created by President Paul Biya and a nine-member ministerial committee headed by Prime Minister Simon Achidi Achu.

Friction between them has delayed agreement with potential sponsors, whose support is essential now a 106 million CFA franc (1,83,000 US) International Football Federation (FIFA) grant has been spent.

Sponsors are expected to provide three billion CFA (5 million US), but the bill for training and sending the Lions, plus a large delegation, to the finals in the United States is estimated by President Biya's technical committee at five billion CFA (8.6 million US). That includes government,

tourism and soccer officials, as well as media and artists.

Coach Henri Michel returned from Paris on Sunday with some good news. Free facilities for his team at a training centre in Clairefontaine, France, from April 22.

Michel is expected to decide this week whether to include 42-year-old striker Roger Milla, the star of Cameroon's 1990 World Cup success, in the squad.

Milla was not among the players called up for Monday's training session, but Michel is under pressure to include Cameroon's favourite son.

Cameroon's 26-strong amateur squad plays games in South Korea and Hong Kong in early May before the Europe-based professionals join up in Athens on May 9th for a mini-tournament against Greece and Bolivia.

Michel also hopes to pit his side against a French club before stopping over in the Caribbean to play Guadeloupe and Martinique on the way to Los Angeles in June.

Caniggia wants no big fuss over his return

BUENOS AIRES, Apr 5: Argentina striker Claudio Caniggia, gunning for a World Cup place after his 13-month ban for drug abuse expires in May, dismissed talk on Monday of a crisis in the national team, reports Reuter.

"Don't start billing me as a saviour," he snorted at a news conference. "Remember that not long ago Argentina had a 33-match unbeaten run which must be a world record."

Caniggia, 27, tested positive for cocaine in March 1993 while playing for Italian side Roma. He has not played since. In his absence Argentina, twice world champions in the last 16 years, lacked punch up front as they struggled through the group qualifiers.

Caniggia, set to make his comeback a day after his ban expires on May 8 when Roma play a friendly against his former Argentine club River Plate, will be training with the national squad.

Caniggia, who will inject much-needed speed into the Argentine attack, denies that recent defeats against Brazil and Colombia is a sign Argentina will struggle in the United States.

Caniggia diplomatically skirted giving a straight answer to a question on the possibility that Diego Maradona might quit the team.

"Only Maradona knows how he feels. He has been injured and you can't expect him to be 100 per cent fit. But even a 70 per cent Maradona would be very useful," he said.

Over Easter a moody Maradona said he would announce today whether he will play in a fourth World Cup.

Watching the grass grow



KING GEORGE, Virginia, Apr 5: The first battle of the World Cup finals is already under way, with carefully cultivated grass struggling to survive and reach the semifinals, reports AFP.

So far, turf is losing. That's bad news for teams playing at Giants Stadium, site of one semifinal and six other games in the 24-team tournament that begins on June 17.

"It's a major challenge. The eyes of the world are on these fields," said Jim Watson, the 1994 World Cup agronomy coordinator. "Some people think it's just grass, so you just mow and water it. For the World Cup, it takes a lot of attention and technology."

Because the New York Stadium plays host to a semifinal, officials wanted to match the field conditions to the Rose Bowl, site of the other semifinal and the July 17 tie match.

But tests of 10,800 square metres of Bermuda grass growing at southern turf farms here showed some dead patches. As a result, a slower surface might have to be used at Giants Stadium.

"If 50 per cent of the grass didn't make it, we wouldn't use that sod," Watson said. "If 90 per cent did, we would use it. At this point in time, I'm dubious of that prospect."

Watson must decide by Friday if grass grown on these 120 rural hectares south of Washington will work. If too much has died, reserve grass growing in Long Island and New England will be used. But the back-up is Kentucky bluegrass, a heartier type that will produce different pitch than the Rose Bowl.

"With the Bermuda grass, it will be a fast field, dense enough for the ball to roll true, and there should be no high bouncing," Watson said.

Bluegrass will die if it is cut below 2.54 centimetres off the ground. A Bermuda surface can be trimmed to half that length. "Bluegrass would tend to be a little more soft than Bermuda grass," Watson said. "The ball would probably roll more slowly, but should still roll true."

Grass is scheduled to be installed in Giants Stadium next Monday upon a multi-layered platform designed to allow grass growth while protecting an artificial turf field below, assembly of the base has taken three weeks.

"It's an enormous project. None of this has ever been

done before," tournament turf consultant Don Lockerbie said. "My three worst words are 'some assembly required.'"

Three layers of plastic and a set of wood planks support a drainage system beneath a special 25-centimetre layer of nutrient-rich soil, clay, sand and decayed vegetable matter. Grass strips 1.2 m long will be set upon the base by forklifts with special tires.

The Giants Stadium field will be slightly under one metre smaller on all sides than FIFA standards, but the configurations are fine. That has never been a big issue," organising committee chairman Alan Rothenberg said.

The Clark Company will install and maintain grass fields at New York and Detroit's Indoor Stadium, posting 900,000 dollars to assure each artificial field against damage.

The details of Giants Stadium worry company president Scott Clark less than the time deadline in Detroit. The 2,300 pieces of grass must be installed a week before the start of play.

"Because of the roof at Detroit, there is no sunlight. So we have to wait until the last possible minute to install the grass," Clark said. "The big problem is time. It's a mad rush."

Dye might be needed to give the indoor field proper colour by the end of two weeks of football. But that should not affect play, Watson said.

"Overall, I feel very comfortable about the grass situation everywhere," Watson said.

Tyson to fight on

INDIANAPOLIS, Apr 5: Former American boxing champion Mike Tyson failed to have his rape conviction overturned in Indiana state courts and the US Supreme Court. So he's going to take a shot at the US District Court, reports AP.

Tyson's attorneys filed a petition Monday in federal court in Indianapolis. The writ claims a prisoner should be freed because his imprisonment violates his constitutional rights.

Tyson was convicted in February 1992 of raping Desiree Washington, a participant in the Miss Black America pageant in Indianapolis. She was assaulted by Tyson in July 1991 in his hotel room.

In Monday's petition, Tyson's attorneys offered arguments identical to those previously rejected by the Indiana Court of Appeals. The Indiana Supreme Court voted not to reconsider the case.

The US Supreme Court also refused in March to hear Tyson's case, leaving intact the state court ruling.

Tyson was sentenced to 10 years in prison, with four of those years suspended. He is incarcerated at the Indiana Youth Centre near Plainfield and scheduled to be released in May 1995.

In the petition, Tyson's attorneys repeat four arguments. They claim Tyson's rights were violated because:

- The trial judge excluded three witnesses crucial to the boxer's case.

- Jurors were not allowed to hear evidence about Washington's past.

- The trial judge refused the defense attorney's request to give certain instructions to the jury.

- The prosecutor was able to decide which Superior Court judge would hear the case.

ATP top 20 money winners

MONACO, Apr 5: Leading money winners in men's tennis issued by the ATP Tour on Monday, reports Reuter.

- 1. Pete Sampras (US) 970,038 dollars
2. Stefan Edberg (Sweden) 648,499
3. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia) 380,465
4. Todd Martin (US) 344,679
5. Petr Korda (Czech Republic) 336,575
6. Paul Haarhuis (Netherlands) 334,110
7. Magnus Gustafsson (Sweden) 309,233
8. Boris Becker (Germany) 271,775
9. Sergi Bruguera (Spain) 264,730
10. Wayne Ferreira (South Africa) 237,849
11. Michael Chang (US) 228,550
12. Jim Courier (US) 215,919
13. Michael Stich (Germany) 215,567
14. Alexander Volkov (Russia) 214,632
15. Andre Agassi (US) 211,850
16. Jacco Eltingh (Netherlands) 209,668
17. Jonathan Stark (US) 195,571
18. Byron Black (Zimbabwe) 175,906
19. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Russia) 174,297
20. Andrei Olhovskiy (Russia) 172,855



Blackburn Rovers striker Alan Shearer (R) shrugs off a challenge by Everton's David Unsworth during their FA Cup match at Goodison Park on Monday. Rovers won 3-0. — AFP photo

Ultimatum for Russian rebels



MOSCOW, Apr 5: Russia's soccer chief, gave their rebel national stars five days on Monday to knuckle under and accept coach Pavel Sadyrin or be shut out of the World Cup, reports Reuter.

"We must have clarity about which players we are getting ready for the championships," Russian Football Federation vice-president Nikita Simonyan told reporters after a crisis meeting of Premier Division managers.

"We have to end this indecision." The refusal of a dozen top players, including virtually all the favourites for the squad, to play under Sadyrin has seriously jeopardised Russia's chances in the first World Cup since the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Simonyan said the players had until Friday to indicate in writing their willingness to play in the finals in the United States starting in June.

"The Russian Football Federation will not give in. FIFA and UEFA are on our side, and managers all over the world," he said referring to soccer's world and European governing bodies.

Simonyan said they had been negotiating with all the rebels for more than five months. "I don't know how much time we have wasted on talks."

"There has never been anything like what happened here, anywhere in the world," he said. "Why do we have to break our contract with Sadyrin seeing that we were able to qualify (for the finals) six months early?"

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