

Now ball-tampering charge against an umpire

More trouble for Malik

HARARE, Feb 17. Pakistan captain Salim Malik was fined 50 per cent of his match fee (150 dollar) on Friday for suggesting that umpire Ian Robinson had interfered with the ball during the second day of play in the third Test against Zimbabwe on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Salim was also handed a two-Test suspended sentence while opening batsman Amir Sohail was given a severe reprimand for the same offence but escaped a fine.

The statement released by match referee Jackie Hendriks and Zimbabwe Cricket Union chief executive Don Arnott said that the umpires — Robinson and the Australian Steve Randell — had reported the players after they had suggested that the Zimbabwean Robinson had wet one side of the ball, currently in use, or interfered with it in some way.

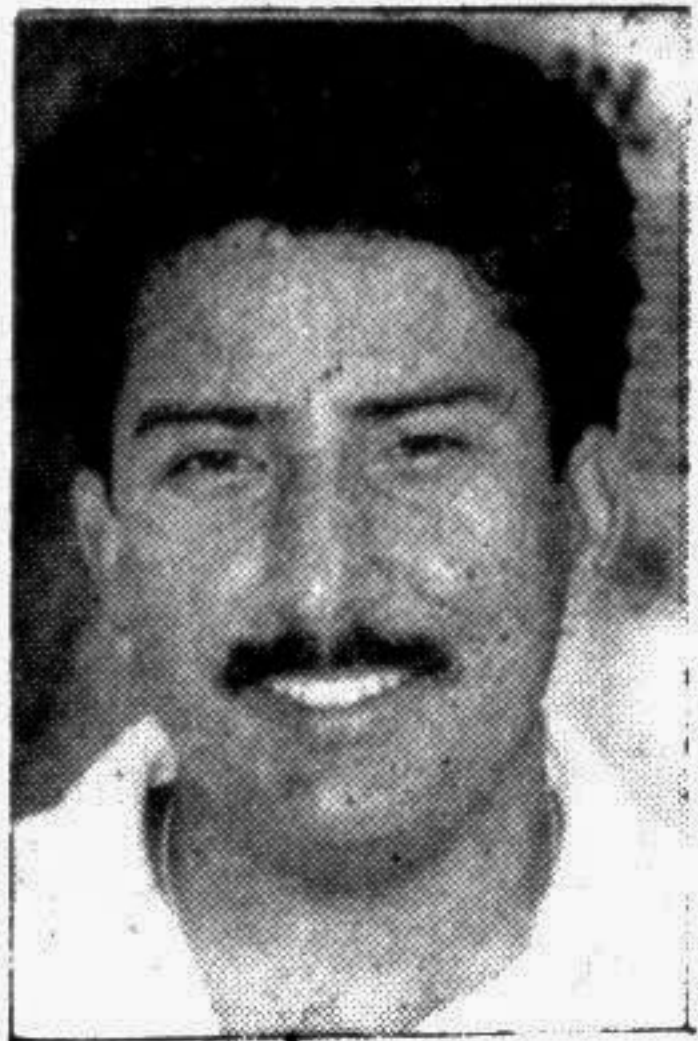
Hendriks concluded that both players had breached sections of the International Cricket Conference's code of conduct and expressed "extreme displeasure and disappointment" with Salim.

The fine comes at the end of an unhappy week for Salim who denied on Wednesday newspaper allegations that he had offered bribes to Australian spinners Shane Warne and Tim May to lose the first Test in Karachi last year.

BAD NEWS FOR ZIMBABWE

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe could be without strike bowler Heath Streak when play resumes after Friday's rest day.

Streak strained his side while batting late on Wednesday afternoon and even if he is able to bowl when Pakistan begin their second innings on Saturday, it is unlikely to be at



SALIM MALIK

Zimbabwe hold a 12-run lead after a 40-run ninth wicket partnership between Paul Strang and David Brain steered them to a first innings total of 243. Streak's injury will be a blow to Zimbabwe's chances of capping their first win in Test Cricket with a series victory.

Since his Test debut in Pakistan last year, the 20-year-old trainee game hunter has moved swiftly up the world rankings with 39 wickets in nine Tests.

In Zimbabwe's historic win in the first Test in Harare he took six for 90 in the first innings and three for 15 in the second as Pakistan slumped to an innings defeat.

In Bulawayo, where the tourists levelled the series with an eight wicket win, Streak took five for 70.

He took four for 53 in the first innings of this Test to take his tally for the series to 18 wickets.

"He has got to be the most improved and exciting fast bowling prospect in world cricket," Zimbabwe coach John Hampshire said. "He is young and strong and wants to bowl fast and as much as possible."

"He's totally unfazed by anything. All he believes in is playing cricket at the best of his ability against any kind of opposition. He is going to develop into a real world class bowler over the next two or three years."

Streak, who played rugby for Zimbabwe at under-19 level, is due to go to Madras at the end of the season to former Australian great Dennis Lillee's fast bowling school.

Scores: Pakistan 231 (Inzamamul Haq 101; Heath Streak four for 53); Zimbabwe 243 (Andy flower 37; Aaqib Javed four for 64).

Boon not boon

AUCKLAND, Feb 17: David Boon — one of Australia's most consistent batsmen — is stumped by a form slump, reports AP.

Boon has not passed 25 in his last six Test innings for Australia and another failure in Wednesday's centenary series limited-overs match against South Africa caused further consternation for the chunky Tasmanian.

Australia have matches against New Zealand (Sunday) and India (Wednesday) before the final of the centenary tournament, but Boon said he plans to continue to bat in the middle-order.

It has been suggested he should ask for a return to the opener's role in a bid to get a long stint at the crease.

"I don't think that's something I have to do," Boon said Friday. "I'm still hitting the ball well in the nets, so I feel pretty good about my game."

"What I probably need is to hit one or two in the middle (of the bat) and I'll be away from there."

Boon's slump since his century in the Boxing Day Test against England have concerned the 34-year-old, who asked national coach Bob Simpson to look over his stroke-making.

Simpson reassured Boon there was no technical problem.

"It's disturbing, but it's one of those things that happens," Boon said. "I've had five good years so you have to expect a lean spell."

India play South Africa in the next match of the quad-rangular centenary series in Hamilton on Saturday.



English fans begin to chant during the friendly match against the Republic of Ireland at Lansdowne Road in Dublin on Feb 15. The match had to be abandoned after rioting broke out with Ireland leading 1-0 at the time.

FA looks over hooliganism

LONDON, Feb 17: English football has issued a defiant message to the rest of the world: "We can host a trouble free European Championship next year."

The country's football authorities, police, the clubs due to host the matches and ground and ticketing experts are all agreed that next year's championship must go ahead despite the outbreak of violence by English thugs in Dublin on Wednesday night, reports Reuter.

The English authorities have been given initial backing by FIFA, world soccer's governing body, and UEFA, the European federation despite the fact that Wednesday's violence caused the friendly international between Ireland and England at Lansdowne Road to be abandoned after 27 minutes.

Around 250,000 foreign fans are expected in England next summer and tournament director Glen Kirton is promising: "We will redouble our efforts to ensure their safety."

Kirton says: "Security is always a major concern for any one organising terrorism and football in the past has had its hooliganism."

"We have made tremendous advances in this country since the Hillsborough disaster in 1989 and in many ways our major stadiums are now years ahead of those on the continent."

"We will redouble our efforts, look at what happened in Ireland, learn lessons and make sure it does not happen next year."

Assistant chief constable Malcolm George, the head of Britain's anti-hooligan police operation, agreed the tournament must go ahead.

"Based on our experience and the fact we have been planning for the European Championship for the last 12 months, and bearing in mind the expertise that we have developed, I think we're the best place to host it. But I know we face a difficult task in 1996."

The English FA has already sold around 10,000 million pounds (15.68 million dollar) worth of tickets, the income from just 275,000 of the 1.3 million which will be available for the finals which run from

June 8 to June 30. They are making around 7,000 tickets available to each of the 15 qualifying countries for each of their games, which will take place at eight venues around the country.

Pall Worsop, the managing director of Synchro Systems, the company responsible for issuing the tickets, said there were 10 major security steps being taken to ensure that tickets were not sold to known, or potential trouble-makers. To avoid black market touting, the tickets would be despatched until May 1996.

The most important measure is that the name of everyone applying for a ticket is checked off against a database held by the authorities of known trouble-makers.

The name of everyone buying a ticket is on the ticket to aid identification and with the help of closed circuit TV we can effectively tell who is sitting in every seat in the ground."

Simon Inglis, an expert on football stadiums and a member of the football licensing authority, is also convinced the tournament must be held in England.

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Return to Dublin, not now

LONDON, Feb 17: England will not be returning to Dublin in the foreseeable future, despite Ireland manager Jack Charlton's plea to rearrange the match, abandoned after hooligans rioted on Wednesday night, reports Reuter.

Charlton suggested the match could be rescheduled before the end of the season, but England's Football Association (FA) consider the idea impractical.

"It's a little bit early to start rearranging the match," FA spokeswoman Clare Tomlinson said on Friday.

"There is still a lot of work to be done on finding out what went wrong and why it went wrong."

Charlton admitted he cried with anger when the riot forced the referee to abandon the Lansdowne Road friendly after 27 minutes with Ireland leading 1-0.

"We can't let the thugs win," he told a national newspaper. "We have got to get back and play the game again. We should consider it even before the summer. We can stage it again... and control it."

He was also angered by calls from some quarters that England should not be allowed to host next year's European Championship finals.

"The whole of the nation could suffer because of the stupidity of a few," said Charlton, a member of England's World Cup winning team in 1966 when his country last staged a major international soccer tournament.

Carter's offer

ATLANTA, Feb 17: Former President Jimmy Carter reiterated Thursday that he's ready to help mediate the baseball strike, reports AP.

"We offered to help with the baseball strike. We made it clear. The Carter Center would be available. Our offer stands," Carter said. "I'd be delighted to."

Carter, a postseason visitor to owner Ted Turner's box at Atlanta Braves games, said he knew of one way to shake up negotiators.

"Obviously, if President Clinton were to announce, 'I favor revoking the antitrust exemption,' that would be a major factor in getting it considered more seriously," Carter said.

In the name of their daughter

BUCHAREST, Feb 17: The parents of a young Romanian gymnast beaten to death by her trainer have asked the supreme court of justice to change the man's eight-year jail conviction for manslaughter into a tougher murder sentence, reports Reuter.

Gymnast Adriana Giurca, 11, was savagely beaten by her coach Florin Gheorghe during a training session in November 1993. She died several hours later in hospital.

Maria Giurca, the girl's mother, said on Thursday she had filed an appeal with the supreme court of justice, asking that Gheorghe be sentenced for murder instead of manslaughter.

The supreme court has yet to set a date for the appeal hearing, under Romanian law a murder conviction carries up to 20 years in jail.

Giurca's appeal was filed in Bucharest court, found Gheorghe, 25, guilty of manslaughter and sentenced him to eight years in jail. It was Romania's first court case of violence in sports training.

Brazil without Romario

RIO DE JANEIRO, Feb 17: Romario's sudden exit from the Brazilian national team has raised doubts about when — or even if — he will return, reports AP.

Coach Mario Zagalo was clearly irked at Romario's reluctance to play in a friendly against Slovakia next week.

On Wednesday, he cut the World Cup hero from the squad, saying Romario didn't show the "national team spirit."

"It's no use forcing things," Zagalo said. "The desire to play is fundamental. We did him, and the group, a favour."

The confusion began Tuesday, when Zagalo named his 22-man roster for the Feb 22 match. Romario was among nine World Cup champions on the list.

But Romario begged off, saying he was concerned only with playing for his new club, Flamengo.

He claimed to have an understanding with Brazilian federation president Ricardo Teixeira to be absolved of national team duties until 1996, when Brazil expects to compete in the Olympics. It wasn't clear if he meant all games or just friendly matches.

Flamengo club President Kleber Leite immediately approached his star forward and persuaded him to recant. But Zagalo said not bother.

"Without desire, Romario wouldn't produce satisfactorily," he said. "We won the (World Cup) because we managed to create a national team spirit, and we can't break that."

Zagalo said Romario's personal problems weighed in the decision to release him.

In recent weeks, Romario has been accused of hitting restaurant patrons and threatening a news photographer. A Barcelona woman said he fathered her child, and his wife reportedly has filed for divorce.

Romario's brilliance on the field also has dimmed. He has been slow and ineffective since transferring to Flamengo from FC Barcelona in January.

"We evaluated his statements, his personal problems, the difficult psychological moment he's going through and decided to cut him," said Zagalo. "We don't want to pressure him. Besides, he's not in a good phase, physically or technically."

But Zagalo also was irritated at the way Romario had announced his decision — on live television.

He never told me anything about not playing for the team in 1995, Teixeira didn't know anything, either," he said. "If Romario had looked me up and asked to be dispensed, I would have done it. But not through a television interview."

Romario's dismissal leaves doubts whether he will take part in the continent-wide Copa America July 5-23 in Uruguay.

Team supervisor Americo Faria said no decision had been made about Romario's future.

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Speaking to reporters on Sunday, FAM deputy president Tengku Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah, said the crackdown was only the beginning of the country's war on soccer corruption.

"It is only the beginning. We have to see how effective this line of action is in one or two year's time," he said.

The soccer bribery scandal in Malaysia and Singapore came to light when Singapore's anti-corruption officials arrested Czech striker Michael Vana and a Singaporean referee in August last year on charges of fixing six matches in Malaysia's 16-team professional league in which Singapore plays.

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Vampire Vinny!

LONDON, Feb 17: Claiming it was a prank, Wimbledon defender Vinny Jones said Friday he regretted biting a reporter's nose in the aftermath of the riot by English fans in Dublin, reports AP.

Jones, who once earned a record fine from English soccer officials for making a video that glorified violent play, bit Daily Mirror journalist Ted Oliver after drinking champagne for breakfast at a Dublin hotel Thursday morning.

The incident occurred at the tense city was recovering from the fan violence that forced abandonment of the Ireland-England game the night before.

Oliver's bloody nose was featured on a full-page photograph on page one of the Mirror tabloid Friday morning.

"Vinny clamped my nose with his teeth and shook me like a dog with a dead rabbit," Oliver wrote. "Blood gushed from long holes on either side of my nose. Vinny laughed."

Oliver, who said he had an anti-tetanus shot and an AIDS test after the incident, wrote "If the stars behave like animals, what can we expect from the fans?"

Jones, who tried to brush off the incident Thursday, finally owned up to it Friday morning in an interview with Sky News television.

"I had champagne when we were there," Jones said. "Maybe if I hadn't had so much champagne I wouldn't have bitten him so hard. It was a prank and I apologized to him straight after. He has said his piece."

An English Football Association official witnessed the incident, and the FA has said it will investigate.

"I know I have a tendency that things always seem to go wrong when it's me," Jones said. "It was a prank and I have come out on the wrong end. I would have been down the rabbit hole if I had done it maliciously."

It's bad, I'm shattered," the midfielder said.

SOB games

The national games of Special Olympics, Bangladesh was held at the Dhaka University playground yesterday, reports BSS.

Vice-Chancellor of the Dhaka University Professor Emajuddin Ahmed inaugurated the games as the chief guest.

British High Commissioner Peter J. Fowler, Canadian High Commissioner Jon J. Scott and chairman of Special Olympics Bangladesh, Ashraf-ud-Dowla were, among others, present in the inaugural function.

More than sixty students from different mentally retarded schools took part in different events of the meet.

A sports team, selected from these games, will take part in the Special Olympics to be held in the United States in July this year.



Mentally retarded participants at the national games of Special Olympics Bangladesh held at the Dhaka University playground yesterday.

Valencia dump Real

VALENCIA, Spain, Feb 17: Valencia sealed the exit of league leaders Real Madrid from the Spanish Cup on Thursday with two goals in the last three minutes for a 2-1 home win in the third round second leg match, reports Reuter.

The visitors seemed to have fallen asleep in the 87th minute as Pedrag Mijatovic drove home a goal, followed three minutes later by one from Valencia's captain Fernando Gomez to knock Real Madrid out 4-2 on aggregate.

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers.

CRYPTOQUIP MYZC NEYMYZ URTYK ZQIIYW AHD TN DUQZY WQBSUQBS LSW ALWY QKB BTUR URY EHUY. Yesterday's Cryptquip: MIND READER TO EMPTY-HEADED CLIENT: "FOR YOU, HALF PRICE." Today's Cryptquip clue: B equals W. The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.