

Rutherford on the move

DUNEDIN, New Zealand, July 16: Former New Zealand cricket captain Ken Rutherford said Sunday he has signed a two-year deal with South African provincial side Transvaal, reports AP.

"The cricket issue was naturally part of it but the wider picture was my lifestyle," Rutherford, who was removed as captain last month by selectors, said of the decision. "I needed a new challenge, a new direction."

Rutherford, 29, said Transvaal approached him in March and made a formal offer about seven weeks ago. He decided to delay making a decision and see what else developed.

"The crunch came when I was dropped. That was when everything crystallised, when any lingering doubts disappeared," Rutherford said.

"As it happened there was interest from an Australian state side and another South African province as well, but I was already quite keen on Transvaal."

Rutherford said his financial package was better than anything he would have been offered as New Zealand captain, and included accommodation, car, air-fares for him and his children, and virtually all living expenses.

The Castle Cup competition permits one overseas player in each provincial side.

Rangers race for Raducioiu

GLASGOW, July 16: Rangers manager Walter Smith confirmed on Saturday that he is in negotiations with Spanish club Espanol to sign the Romanian World Cup star Florin Raducioiu, reports AFP.

Smith is hoping to clinch a 2.7 million (about 4.4 million dollars) deal with Barcelona club Espanol for the striker which, coupled with the 4.3 million for Paul Gascoigne, would take the Ibrox club's summer spending to seven million pounds.

The Raducioiu deal could soon be settled and Smith said: "I have met the player's agent and we had further discussions. These talks are ongoing."

Raducioiu, played for Bari and Brescia in the Italian league before signing for Espanol. He is a veteran of two World Cup finals, scoring four goals in Romania's quarter-final run in the United States.

He appeared to have secured Romania's place in the semifinals when scoring the second of his two goals in extra time against Sweden but his elegant side were later beaten on penalties.

Rangers want another signing completed before the August 1 deadline for their European Cup preliminary round tie with Anorthosis Famagusta of Cyprus.

Meanwhile, around 500 Tottenham fans are expected in Glasgow in two weeks to greet 4.5 million pound signing Chris Armstrong — and pay tribute to Spurs old boy Gascoigne.

The Rangers international tournament on July 29 and 30 will mark Gascoigne's Ibrox bow since his move from Lazio.

Ajax appeal to FIFA for Santos

AMSTERDAM, July 16: Ajax Amsterdam said on Saturday they have appealed to FIFA to stop Brazil defender Marcelo Santos quitting the club barely a month after joining the European Cup holders, reports AFP.

"We regard Santos as under contract to Ajax but he is not here. FIFA will have to decide," said club spokesman David Endt.

Marcio Santos, who was signed from Fiorentina of Italy for a reported 3.2 million dollars, was not prepared to pay into the pension fund for soccer players in the Netherlands, added Endt.

The 26-year-old, who had agreed a three-year contract as replacement for retired Dutch international Frank Rijkaard, arrived two days late for the first Ajax training session last week and started disputing the pension arrangements the following day.

Under Dutch soccer pension fund rules, players contribute a percentage based on their gross salary. In Santos' case it was reckoned he would end up paying around half his salary into the fund, which players can call on for financial support when their careers are over.

"That was the last straw. Marcio Santos said on Thursday, 'I want out. I had no idea about all of this.'

Endt said the player was fully informed of the pension arrangements during transfer negotiations in London last month.

"The player and his manager knew exactly what the score was," he said.



Mike Atherton (L) and his Lancashire captain Watkinson hold the Benson and Hedges Cup after winning the final against Kent at Lord's on July 15.

— AFP/UNB photo

De Silva ploughs in sands

Lancashire lift B&H Cup



LONDON, July 16:

Lancashire remained on course for cricket's grand slam by beating Kent in the final of the Benson and Hedges Cup at Lord's on Saturday despite a brilliant century by Sri Lankan Test star Aravinda de Silva, reports AFP.

The diminutive Sri Lankan won the hearts of a capacity Lord's crowd, racing to 112 off only 95 balls, but he was unable to prevent captain Mike Watkinson's one-day experts from security a well-deserved victory.

The former Sri Lankan captain single-handedly kept his side in the match with some magical stroke-play but when he was seventh out, underdogs Kent collapsed to prolong their 17-year wait for a domestic trophy.

Lancashire, buoyed by high class innings of 93 and 83 from Mike Atherton and John Crawley, finished victors by the ultimately comfortable margin of 35 runs.

But De Silva, who crashed three sixes and 11 fours, had made it a match to remember and was a popular winner of the gold award.

Before Saturday, 15 innings in limited overs cricket for Kent had failed to produce even a 50 for De Silva — the first Sri Lankan to play in a World Cup final.

But he now joins only two other men — Graham Gooch and Viv Richards — as scores of century in the 24-year history of Benson and Hedges Cup finals.

Had De Silva received more of the strike — rather less than half of it — Kent might have been celebrating.

Instead it was Lancashire's fans who sang in front of the pavilion while their players dreamed of adding further successes in what could be a season of unprecedented for the red rose county.

They are through to the NatWest quarter-finals and are well-placed in both County Championship and Sunday League competitions.

Saturday's success was built on a total of 274 for seven, bettered only once in Benson and Hedges finals.

Kent won the toss but they had to wait nearly 20 overs for another success as openers Atherton and Jason Gollan put together a stand of 80.

Seven weeks ago, Atherton stroked his first century at Lord's while leading England to one-day international victory over the

West Indies.

Once again, he provided Lancashire with a perfect platform, pacing his 140-ball innings superbly after surviving an early scare when De Silva just reached but failed to hold a half-chance at long leg.

Australian-born Gollan was not expected to play, having broken a finger during

West Indies.

With Tim Wren holding out to long.

Lancashire skipper Mike Watkinson acknowledged De Silva's brilliant century, admitting: "He looked as though he was going to take it away from us."

"We got a good score but Aravinda played magnificently and it was always in doubt until the very end."

"Aravinda took the attack to us and fortunately we just kept chipping away at the striker at the other end. Kent fought hard but I thought our boys played really well and full credit to them for sticking to it," he added.

Gold award winner De Silva said: "I would have been really pleased if we had been able to win this final but I thought that Lancashire played very well and deserved to win."

De Silva: 112

his England Test debut last week.

But he declared himself fit on the morning and contributed 36 to the opening partnership before bowled by Mark Ealham.

That breakthrough, though, only subjected Kent to the best of former Manchester Grammar School pupils Atherton and Crawley, in 26 overs they added 121 as every bowler apart from Ealham suffered.

The century Atherton deserved was snatched away by Dean Headley, who had the England skipper well caught at mid-wicket by Fulton.

But with Crawley studding a 90-ball innings with a six and five fours, Lancashire continued to make excellent progress until a flurry of late wickets pegged them back just a fraction.

Kent's reply started badly and it was soon clear that all their hopes rested on De Silva. He lost partners at regular intervals and the next highest contributors — David Dulton and Graham Cowdrey — both made only 25 each but the little master had Lanchashire at a loss.

The end effectively came when De Silva pulled Ian Austin to deep mid-wicket where Graham Lloyd held the catch and was quickly surrounded by highly-relieved teammates.

When Steve Marsh fell to Austin's next delivery, there was no way back for Kent and Watkinson had the honour for capturing the final wicket

35 runs.

Lancashire won match by

274.

Scoreboard

Scoreboard after Lancashire's 35-run victory over Kent in the final of the Benson and Hedges Cup final at Lord's on Saturday.

LANCASHIRE:

M. Atherton c Fulton b Headley 93

J. Gollan b Ealham 36

J. Crawley c Taylor b McCague 83

N. Fairbrother c McCague 16

b Headley 12

G. Lloyd run out 10

W. Akram run out 0

M. Watkinson c McCague 0

b Fleming 5

I. Austin not out 5

Extras: (lb-2, w-10, nb-7) 19

Total: 7 wkts (55 overs) 274

Fall of wickets: 1-80; 2-201; 3-236; 4-258; 5-259; 6-266; 7-274.

Bowling: O M R W

Wren 5 0 21 0

Headley 11 0 57 2

McCague 11 - 65 1

Ealham 0 33 1

De Silva 8 0 36 0

Fleming 9 0 60 1

KENT

D. Fulton lbw b Chapple 25

T. Ward c Hegg b Chapple 7

N. Taylor b Yates 14

A. De Silva c Lloyd b Austin 112

G. Cowdrey lbw b Yates 25

M. Fleming b Yates 11

M. Ealham lbw b Watkinson 3

S. Marsh c Crawley b Austin 4

M. McCague not out 11

D. Headley c Chapple b Watkinson 5

T. Wren c Austin b Watkinson 7

Extras: (lb-7, w-2, nb-6) 15

Total: (52.1 overs) 239

Fall of wickets: 1-28; 2-37; 3-81; 4-142; 5-162; 6-180; 7-214; 8-214; 9-219.

Bowling: O M R W

Wasim Akram 10 0 57 0

Chapple 10 1 55 2

Austin 11 4 36 2

Watkinson 10.0 42 3

Yates 11 0 42 3

Lancashire won match by

35 runs.

Graf goes against the grain!

Barmby now Spurs' bait?

LONDON, July 16: England star Nick Barmby could be used as bait in Tottenham's bid to sign unsettled Manchester United winger Andrei Kanchelskis, according to newspaper reports on Saturday, reports AFP.

The 21-year-old forward has been told he can leave White Hart Lane following a burst-up with manager Gerry Francis.

And now Spurs, set to

demand four million pounds (about 6.5 million dollars) for Barmby, look set to step up the pursuit for six million pound-rated Ukrainian Kanchelskis, who has said he is no longer prepared to play under Old Trafford boss Alex Ferguson.

Barmby is understood to be unhappy after being told by Francis that he intends to pair his England colleague

Teddy Sheringham and new 4.5 million pound signing Chris Armstrong as Tottenham's first choice partnership up front next season.

Barmby, who lodged a

transfer request last season

because he was homesick for northern England, was apparently assured he would be Sheringham's sidekick after the departure of Juergen Klinsmann and signed a five-year contract.

Barmby, who won

Wimbledon for a sixth time last weekend, did not say where he might settle and admitted he would be sad to leave Germany.

He also made it clear that

she had no intention of

changing her nationality.

In the past she has hinted

that she might consider basing

herself in England. She already has a second home in New York.

"In the past I was never

tempted to move to Monte

Carlo like other players have done — although it would have made things much easier," she said.

Graf, who returned to

tennis in February after an

injury lay-off because of a

spine problem, is

unbeaten in 1995 and has

won two Grand Slam titles.

She won the French Open

last month and then notched