

**Warren optimistic**

LONDON, Jan 17: Promoter Frank Warren on Tuesday rejected a prediction from the camp of former champion Lennox Lewis that Frank Bruno's World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight title fight against Mike Tyson in Las Vegas on March 16 would not take place, reports Reuter.

Lewis's financial backer Panos Eliades, who has been fighting a legal battle for Lewis to fight fellow Briton Bruno instead, told a news conference: "Personally I don't think Bruno-Tyson will happen."

Don King is planning his whole strategy behind Tyson and this would be a very dangerous fight. He would be taking a terrible risk putting Tyson in with Bruno.

"If you are Don King would you risk your prize asset I don't think he is that type of gambling man."

Warren, Bruno's London promoter, said: "Frank is contracted to fight Tyson. The fight has been advertised and the tickets are on sale. There is no doubt in my mind or Don King's mind that the fight will take place."

Eliades confirmed that Lewis and arch-rival Riddick Bowe had agreed to meet on April 20 in Las Vegas.

But he said after two months of negotiations the two sides had not agreed on the purse split.

He said that unless American Bowe was able to resolve his differences with cable network HBO the fight could not take place.

If the fight did not take place, Eliades added, Lewis would still box on that date in Las Vegas, Atlantic City or South Africa.

**Romesh gives 'em creeps**

MELBOURNE, Jan 17: Australian captain Mark Taylor says he has a plan to counter the explosive batting skills of Sri Lanka's Romesh Kaluwitharana in the opening match of the World Series Cup finals here Thursday, reports agencies.

The tiny Kaluwitharana has posed headaches for the Australian bowlers since he started to open for the Sri Lankans in the triangular series.

After innings of 8, 0, 8, 0 at the start of the tournament, Kaluwitharana has blossomed with scores of 77, 27, 50 and 74.

Kaluwitharana's aggression was the key to Sri Lanka's three-wicket victory over the Australians in Melbourne on Tuesday night — a victory which clinched the Sri Lankans their place in the finals.

The win meant Sri Lanka qualified ahead of the West Indies for the best-of-three finals series.

"We have to get our bowlers to bowl on one spot," Taylor said. "We are not bowling on one side of the wicket at all, and that's probably been the worst part."

"He's hitting it over cover, and over mid-wicket, which suggests to me we can bowl better."

"If we can do that and put the pressure on him early it will give us a chance."

While Taylor admitted his bowlers had been erratic, he also said Kaluwitharana is one of the best one-day batsmen in the world at the moment.

He said the Sri Lankan opener has a good eye and a full range of shots, which makes it difficult to set fields in the opening 15 overs when restrictions are in place.

"He is backing his judgement and they say fortune favours the brave," Taylor said.



**KALUWITHARANA**

He's got more than one shot and he's not hitting the ball in one spot. If he was doing that I would be able to put a bloke there, but he is hitting them all in different spots.

"If he is hitting us all around the park it's very hard to set a field to him."

That's exactly what happened in Tuesday's day-night match as Kaluwitharana clocked up the third fastest WSC half-century. He belted 15 runs off one Glenn McGrath over, with a mixture of lofted shots both through the

on and off side and took just 32 balls to reach his 50.

**Only New Zealand all-rounder Lance Cairns (50 off 21 balls versus Australia in 1982-83) and West Indian Clive Lloyd (50 off 28 balls against Sri Lanka 1984-85) have scored quicker half-centuries.**

Such was Kaluwitharana's dominance that he scored 60 of his team's first 80 runs and Taylor admits the Australians are having difficulty stemming his constant run flow.

"It's not easy to place a field to him because he is such a good striker of the ball," he said.

Kaluwitharana said he adopts a simple philosophy in one-day matches.

"If it is loose, I go after it," said the wicketkeeper-batsman.

The second finals match is scheduled for Sydney on Saturday with the third match, if needed, also in Sydney on Monday.

**TEAMS:**

**AUSTRALIA:** Mark Taylor (captain), Shane Warne, Ian Healy, Stuart Law, Shane Lee, Craig McDermott, Glenn McGrath, Paul Reiffel, Ricky Ponting, Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh, Shane Warne.

**SRI LANKA:** Arjuna Ranatunga (captain), Aravinda de Silva, Kumara Dharmasena, Asanka Gurusinha, Sanath Jayasuriya, Romesh Kaluwitharana, Ruwan Kalpage, Roshan Mahanama, Ravindra Pushpakumara, Hashan Tillakaratne, Chaminda Vaas, Pramodya Wickramasinghe.

**Dreary draw in Hamilton**

HAMILTON Jan 17: The first cricket Test between New Zealand and Zimbabwe ended in a draw Wednesday after both teams failed to take advantage of opportunities to win, reports agencies.

Set 257 to win in a minimum of 61 overs, Zimbabwe was 208 for six at stumps.

Zimbabwe started their run chase in style with Grant Flower and Stuart Carlisle reaching 50 in the 11th over.

Carlisle (19) went to 56 but Guy Whittall joined Flower to maintain the run rate at the required mark of around four per over.

Whittall (20) gave Roger Twose his first Test wicket when he pulled a catch to Robert Kennedy at mid-wicket.

Flower (59) went to a stunning delivery from Chris Cairns, caught behind, and Zimbabwe then suffered some controversial umpiring decisions.

David Houghton, who'd just passed 1,000 runs in Test cricket, was the victim of a dubious leg before wicket call which gave Twose his second wicket.

Allstar Campbell was caught behind trying to sweep a delivery from off-spinner Dipak Patel but was visibly angry at the decision.

Zimbabwe was then 151 for five and when Health Streak went to 177 with 12 overs remaining, New Zealand had a real chance of victory.

But Zimbabwe closed then up, Andy Flower picking off the odd boundary on his way to 58 not out and Paul Strang facing several maiden overs from Patel to be scoreless after 37 minutes at the crease when stumps were drawn.

"I never had any worries about losing. I might even have declared at 240 ahead," said New Zealand captain Lee Germon on declaring his team's second innings at 222 for five.

"I just thought 60 was the minimum number of overs to get them out," he said.

"They started well but the team fielding in these situations is in control. It was up to me to set the fields I wanted and use the bowlers the way I wanted."

"Even when they got a flyer I was never worried."

Adam Parore was unbeaten on 84 and Germon was on 22 when the declaration came.

The Kiwis, who lost Cairns for seven in the fifth over of the morning, scored 93 runs in the first session off 19 overs at a rate of nearly five an over.

Parore reached his fourth Test half-century from 128 balls in 167 minutes.

Only some tight bowling by Streak and Paul String in

**Lamb's last**

LONDON, Jan 17: Former England batsman Allan Lamb announced Tuesday he will play one last season for English county side Northamptonshire before retiring from first class cricket, reports AFP.

The 41-year-old, who played 79 Tests from 1982 to 1992, gave up the county captaincy at the end of last season but intends to accept the offer of a new one-year contract.

"Unless something really untoward happens I will be playing this season—and it will definitely be my last," confirmed Lamb.

"I've had a good run and it's time now to let some of the youngsters have a go, but I'll be doing my best this year to try and bring some success to Northants."

Northants chief executive Steve Coverdale added: "We are delighted that Allan has decided to play."

"After last season he understandably decided to take time considering his future, but the way he batted in 1995 was almost Allan Lamb at his best. Any repetition of that this year will make us an even more formidable side."

**Richie throws caution to the winds**

SYDNEY, Jan 17: West Indies captain Richie Richardson maintained today his side would still be a force in the forthcoming World Cup despite an abject performance on their tour of Australia, reports Reuter.

Richardson and his team flew out of Sydney on Wednesday after losing five of their eight World Series matches and failing to qualify for the finals of the limited overs competition.

Sri Lanka won the right to take on Australia in the three-match World Series finals, starting in Melbourne tomorrow, when they defeated Mark Taylor's Australians by three wickets in the final qualifying match on Tuesday night.

That failure came after West Indies lost the Frank Worrell Trophy to Australia at home last year, which in turn was followed by their disappointing and strife-torn tour of England.

To make matters worse for Richardson as he and his team mates jetted home, the immediate future of world record-holder batsman Brian Lara was still uncertain with less than a month before the start of the World Cup.

As the West Indians tumbled to defeat in Australia, Lara was still cooling



**RICHIE RICHARDSON**

his heels at home after pulling out of the tour because of disciplinary action taken against him after the England series.

The West Indies selectors are due to meet in Barbados next Tuesday to select their final 14-man squad for the World Cup. Lara has been included in a provisional squad of 18.

In a statement, the West Indies Cricket Board of Control said it would hold a training camp in Barbados from January 31 to February 6.

Despite the series of setbacks, Richardson told reporters in Sydney his side's World Cup chances were the same as those of any of the other cricketing powers.

"They are as good as anybody's," Richardson said. "But, it's going to be very, very competitive. There's Australia

and South Africa and Sri Lanka, India and Pakistan are playing at home, so it's very difficult to predict."

Richardson was heartened by a marked improvement that saw his side win three of their last four World Series games.

"It showed that we have still got something in us and now we go home to reflect, regroup and work on our weaknesses to try to improve for the World Cup," Richardson said.

Of those weaknesses, Richardson pinpointed his side's fragile batting as the major contributor to their run of losses.

"We have got to improve in all areas, especially our batting," Richardson said.

"Obviously it's very disappointing we didn't get to the finals. Maybe we just didn't play well enough."

"But I think it was mainly our batting. We didn't bat as consistently as we are capable of doing and that's where we fell short."

One of the few positive signs to emerge from the tour was the performance of pace bowler and lower order batsman Otis Gibson, who had been overlooked for the West Indies' first three World Series matches.

"Certainly Otis Gibson stands out. He bowled very, very well and also batted well," Richardson said.

**Malcolm eats humble pie**

LONDON, Jan 17: Devon Malcolm has admitted that race was not an issue in his dispute with England cricket boss Ray Illingworth, reports Reuter.

Derbyshire's Jamaica-born fast bowler was strongly criticised on Monday for asking in a newspaper article whether he would have been treated the same way by Illingworth if "I had been a white bowler?"

His remarks were described as offensive by Test and County Cricket Board spokesman Richard Little.

But in a statement on Tuesday Malcolm's legal representatives said that although he had been treated harshly on the current South African tour the management had not discriminated against him because of his colour.

"Malcolm has asked us to clarify his position," the statement said. "His reference to colour, as reported, was in the context of his trying not to understand the reasons for his treatment and was one of several reasons considered by him."

"He hopes that a post-tour analysis will reveal the reasons for his treatment."

Malcolm has said that his confidence was destroyed by Illingworth and claimed he would have packed his bags and returned to England if his teammates had not dissuaded him.

Illingworth, in Durban for England's one-day international against South Africa today, said Malcolm's comments had not affected team morale.

"I think the only person it has affected is me and I am very upset by it."

"But I have spoken to Lord's and I imagine they will take the necessary action if and when the right time comes along."

Malcolm returned to England after the five-match Test series.

**Ploenchit retains WBO title**

BANGKOK, Jan 17: Thailand's Saen Sor Ploenchit knocked down Chang Youngsoon in the ninth and 12th rounds Sunday night and easily won the seventh defence of his World Boxing Association flyweight title with a unanimous decision, reports AP.

With a series of left jabs, the 25-year-old Thai had Chang's nose bleeding throughout most of the fight. The 26-year-old South Korean rallied with a flurry of punches on Saen's head and midsection, but collapsed on top of the Thai as the fight ended.

Saen won 117-113, 116-113 and 119-111 on the three judges' scorecards, improving his record to 23-0.

The loss was Chang's first in 17 bouts.

Saen has won five 23 victories by knockout, including two of his championships bouts.

Both fighters came into the bout weighing 50 kilograms (112 pounds).

More than 10,000 fans watched the championship fight Sunday night at an outdoor ring in the town of Northaburi, 10 kilometres (six miles) north of Bangkok.

**Agassi returns to form**

MELBOURNE, Jan 17 (AP): Monica Seles says things have changed in women's tennis during the 2 1/2 years she sat out after being stabbed by a spectator in Germany.

"I notice a lot of taller girls are coming up and hitting the ball much harder...I have to play some good tennis to finish the first few rounds. ...As I remember, three, four years ago it was so much easier in the early rounds."

She also denied what she felt was a general notion that "all I do after I finish my match is shop."

She goes shopping, she said, only to "give something to myself after the end of a tournament if I have done well, like I bonus."

She conceded that in Sydney, where she won a tournament on Sunday before coming to Melbourne for the Australian Open, she bought her bonus on Saturday — a "Japanese-style sarong skirt."

On the anniversary of the catastrophic earthquake that wrecked her family home in Kobe, Japan, 15th seed Naoko Sawamatsu advanced into the Australian Open's third round with a 6-4, 6-3 victory Wednesday over American Linda Wild.

Sawamatsu was a sentimental favorite last year as she battled into the quarter-finals despite the anxieties and uncertainties over what was happening at home.

The quake, on the opening day of last year's Open, killed more than 6,000 people, but her family survived and now lives in the nearby city of Osaka.

"On this year's opening day, Sawamatsu said she woke up feeling frightened for just a few seconds. But then she went out and won her first round match."

"It was a very tough time for me last year, but only outside of the court," Sawamatsu said Wednesday. "I just try to focus on my tennis on the court. It's a different life tennis and my personal life."

When world No. 5 Michael Chang isn't downing his tennis opponents, he likes to unwind with a bit of fishing,

**First farewell to Stefan**



Unseeded French Jean-Philippe Fleurian exudes his emotion after conceding a match point against former world number one Stefan Edberg during their second round of Australian Open in Melbourne January 17. Fleurian played a spectacular match to send the prolific Swede packing.

Argentina, and No. 5 Michael Chang breezed past Jakob Hlasek of Switzerland 6-1, 6-3, 6-3.

Edberg, whose six Grand Slam titles include Australian points, reports AP.

If age has slightly slowed Edberg, who plans to retire at the end of the year, a nagging groin injury didn't seem to hinder former and once-again women's No. 1 Monica Seles.

While Edberg struggled through his second five-set match in two days, losing 6-4, 2-6, 4-6, 6-2, 6-3 to French qualifier Jean-Philippe Fleurian in just under three hours, Seles disposed of Katarina Stupenkova of Slovakia 6-1, 6-1, in 51 minutes.

"It's not great but it's there and I am just going to play through it," she said of the right groin pull suffered when she was winning a warmup tournament last week.

Another famous name returned to prominence, Patrick McEnroe, younger brother of former No. 1 John, overcame a miserable start to upset No. 14 Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine 6-2, 6-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-2. The younger McEnroe, ranked No. 57, was

a semifinalist here in 1991.

Casualties among seeded players also included No. 9 Wayne Ferreira of South Africa, who was hampered by a hamstring injury in a 6-1, 6-3, 6-0 loss to Karol Kucera of Slovakia.

No. 3 Thomas Muster advanced to the third round with a 6-4, 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (7-4) victory over Javier Frana of

Open triumphs in 1985 and 1987, has fallen from No. 1 in 1990-91 to No. 31 in the rankings.

But no one has matched his durability. This was his 51st consecutive Grand Slam tournament — the most among active players. He also has played the most five-set matches among them, with a record of 26-19.

Aside from winning the Australian twice on grass, he also was runner-up here on hardcourts in 1990, 1992 and 1993 and a semifinalist in 1994. He lost in the fourth round last year.

The ovation at the end of Wednesday's match, he said, "felt good in one way and bad in one way because I still lost the match but at the same time you fell good about all the support that I had."

"Gentleman" wasn't the word being used at the match between No. 8 Jim Courier and fellow American Jeff Tarango, notorious for outraging the tennis establishment by walking out of a match at Wimbledon last year, accusing an umpire of corruption.

Both say they are friends off court, but Tarango was shouting at the umpire, trying to have Courier penalised for foul language and throwing his racket. He said later a penalty point could end up swinging a close match.

Tarango, still on probation after paying dir 28,256 for the Wimbledon incident, said, "I am restraining myself and it would be very relaxing for me to know that I can throw my racket."

Courier, the 1992 and 1993 champion here, rebounded from 1-4 in the third set and won 7-5, 6-7 (7-2), 6-4, 6-3 in 3 hours, 22 minutes. He said the outbursts of Tarango, a "marked man," didn't bother him.

They were followed on Center Court by three-time champion Seles, who expressed surprise that her opponent "didn't seem to me to be really into the match."

Meanwhile, with tougher matches approaching, "I probably won't be practicing as much as I would like to."

Also advancing to the third round were No. 6 Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina, No. 7 Iva Majoli of Croatia, No. 15 Naoko Sawamatsu of Japan and two American seeds — No. 9 Mary Joe Fernandez and No. 13 Chanda Rubin.

Sabatini beat Karina Habudov of Slovakia 6-4, 6-3, Majoli beat American Lori McNeil 6-3, 6-2, Fernandez beat Maria-Antonia Sanchez Lorenzo of Spain 6-2, 6-0, Rubin beat Tina Krizan of Slovenia 6-7 (7-3), 6-2, 6-3, and Sawamatsu ousted American, Linda Wild 6-4, 6-3.

Advancing among men's seeds were No. 11 Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands and No. 15 Todd Martin. K Rajček beat Frederik Fetterlein of Denmark 6-2, 6-4, 6-4 and Martin struggled past fellow American, Richey Reneberg 6-2, 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (7-5).

**AUSSIE OPEN NOTEBOOK**

and his philosophy matches his on-court approach:

"I am patient when (the fish) are there; if they are not there I've got to go get them, so I've got to go look for them," he said.

A 75-pound striped marlin caught off Mexico late in December is Chang's biggest haul so far.

"It depends on the circumstances and I still apply that to tennis, too. Sometimes I need to be a little more patient, sometimes I need to take it to my opponent but tennis is still very much a thinking man's game. There is talk of a lot of power overtaking tennis but the is still strategy, maybe you don't see it but it is always there."

Chang is still reeling in opponents on the tennis courts.

"Well, there are still a lot

**Steffi to sort trouble out**

BONN, Jan 17: German television reported on Tuesday that tennis star Steffi Graf would pay a multi-million-dollar fine to end a tax-evasion investigation that has centred on her and her father, reports Reuter.

"The tax-evasion probe of Steffi Graf will be suspended in return for her paying several million marks," Germany's ZDF Network reported, without identifying the source of its information.

"Prosecutors in Mannheim are reportedly demanding five million marks (3.4 million dollars) as a fine. In contrast, Steffi Graf's attorney has offered only two million," it said.

Prosecutors and Graf's attorneys were not immediately available for comment.

ZDF also reported that the Graf family had guaranteed paying 25 million marks (17 million dollars) in back taxes.

The star's father, Peter Graf, 57, has been in investigative custody in a manheim prison since August as part of the probe. Steffi Graf has consistently said she knew little about how her huge fortune was managed, having entrusted her financial affairs to her father and his advisers from a young age. Prosecutors have said they have no reason to detain her.



**STEFAN EDBERG**