

Cairns to miss one-dayers

WELLINGTON, Jan 29. Key all-rounder Chris Cairns is almost certain to miss the remaining two matches of New Zealand's limited-overs cricket series against Zimbabwe with a calf muscle strain, reports AP.

Cairns suffered the injury during Sunday's first match of the series in Auckland, which New Zealand won by 74 runs.

He has been ruled out of the second match in Wellington on Wednesday and is unlikely to play in the day-night match in Napier on Saturday.

"I'm setting my sights on trying to be fit for Saturday, but I'm also looking ahead of the World Cup," said Cairns.

New Zealand coach Glenn Turner was more pessimistic, saying the injury could take between 10 days and six weeks to heal.

With Cairns unavailable for Wednesday's match at the Basin Reserve and Chris Harris still recovering from injury, New Zealand will have to introduce either Robert Kennedy or Dion Nash - or possibly both.

Seles to play in Toray Open

TOKYO, Jan 29: Fresh from her victory in Melbourne Monica Seles said Monday she was looking forward to competing in the Toray Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament this week, reports AP.

"The last time I was here at the Toray Pan Pacific was in 1991.

"Unfortunately, I couldn't play, because I got injured. So I'm very excited about coming back to Japan. I always played some great tennis here," said Seles.

Seles pulled out of the 1991 indoor tournament without hitting a ball, while winning an outdoor event twice in 1991 and 1992 here.

"We have a very strong field this year, lot of us coming after the Australian Open. I think we played some great matches there," said the world co-number one, who captured her ninth Grand Slam title in Melbourne on Saturday in the absence of her arch-rival Steffi Graf of Germany.

Seles suffered her only defeat since her comeback at the hands of Graf in the US Open final in September.

Seles, who became a US citizen in March 1994, came back to the tennis world in an exhibition in July last year after being stabbed in the back by a deranged Graf fan in a tournament in Hamburg in April 1993.

Graf's withdrawal from Tokyo following foot surgery in December, gives Seles a better chance of stretching her winning streak this season, following her victories at Sydney and Melbourne.

Seles' major rivals this week include Spaniards Conchita Martinez, the 1994 Wimbledon champion, and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Japanese tennis queen and defending champion Kimiko Date, and Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria.

Three-time champion Gabriela Sabatini of Argentina, Iva Majoli of Croatia, Lindsay Davenport of the United States and Martina Hingis of Switzerland are also expected to pose threats.

However, Hingis, visiting Tokyo for the first time, was drawn against a tough first-round opponent - sixth-seeded Sabatini - on Tuesday.

"I hope I can do better than last time I played her in New York I think I will have a chance," said the 15-year-old.

Bubka wins at a canter

DONETSK, Ukraine, Jan 29: Local hero Sergei Bubka easily won the annual international pole vault competition he organises in his Ukrainian home town with a leap of 5.90 metres on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Bubka cleared the height on his second attempt, easing away from Russian rivals Maxim Tarasov and Pyotr Bockharyev.

The world champion then had the bar placed at 6-16. But 4,500 fans in his native Donetsk, in Ukraine's grim and grimy coal and steel belt, were disappointed that his three attempts to break his three-year-old record fell short.

Trasov cleared 5.85 metres but failed in three efforts to make 5.95. Bockharyev tied for third with France's Jean Galfione on 5.70.

"The first competition after a long period off is always tough," Bubka told journalists after the competition.

Annual sports

The award ceremony of the annual sports competition of the Rajarbagh Police Lines High School was held yesterday, says a press release.

AN Hussein, Commissioner, DMP, attended the function, held at the police lines ground, as chief guest.

Refaat Ara Khanam and Mezbahuddin of Class X were awarded the champion and runner-up medals.

Shaneez Hussein distributed the prizes while Meera Roy, headmistress of the school, gave the welcome address.

Dealing with deadly arm



ISLAMABAD, Jan 29 (AFP) A year ago they were trying to pension off Allan Donald into semi-retirement. He didn't like it.

Batsmen have been paying for the slight ever since.

English county club Warwickshire thought they were being fair to the South African pace bowler when they suggested he think about a coaching post.

They had, after all, just won three titles with the help of West Indian signing Brian Lara, who had stood in for Donald in 1994 at Edgbaston.

Donald was already contracted for 1995, after that, well, why not rest weary 29-year-old bones, spend a bit more time with his English wife and bring on Warwickshire's bowlers of tomorrow?

The Afrikaaner, however - nicknamed "White Lightning" - wasn't quite ready to be yesterday's man. He admitted: "It upset me a lot. I knew it could mean this was my last year at the club. But I couldn't come back feeling negative."

The response could not have been more decisive. While Lara, a mere 25-year-old stripling, was suffering from exhaustion and asking to be released from his contract, Donald, his run-up remodelled, was on his way

to 88 wickets... and Warwickshire to two more trophies.

Fittingly, he took final wicket against Kent that won the County Championship before being mobbed by his teammates.

He said, "The rest of the players were saying thanks for what I have done when we left the field. It was very emotional anyway and it made it even more difficult to stop the tears flowing. I had to swallow deeply."

English batsmen were to suffer again during their tour of South Africa.

Donald, after a brief interruption - 11 for 114 in the Test wing against Zimbabwe - took 19 wickets at just over 26 runs apiece in the five-match series, including his 100th Test victim in the opening encounter.

Five victims for a nig-

gantly 46 helped the South Africans to the series-clinching Cape Town win before Donald, continued to harass them in the one-dayers.

In the fifth encounter, the game that won the seven-match series, his four for 41 earned him the man-of-the-match accolade.

But perhaps his performance in the previous game was even more symptomatic of his strengths. His first three overs went for 30 runs, yet he finished with three wickets. A man who clearly does not let his head drop.

As his captain Hansie Cronje says, "I could never ask for a better man in my team. It is very hard to get the ball out of his hand."

The only man, ironically, to keep pace with him during the series was new discovery Shaun Pollock, who will stand in at Warwickshire next season.

Quick bowlers aren't always at their best in limited-over shoot-outs, but Donald, as accurate as he is quick, is a key component in the South African bowling attack.

"Using a shorter run-up has enabled me to bowl longer spells but it has also improved my rhythm," he says. "I have also learned a few new varieties. Bob Woolmer had been on to me to experiment with a slower ball, because he said I would increasingly need it as I get older."

Get older? Donald? even Warwickshire think he will go on for ever now.

Against England in the Caribbean he piled up 798 runs in the five-Test series, crowning his achievements in the final game at St John's, Antigua, by amassing 375 to break Sir Gary Sobers' 36-year-old record Test score of 365 not out.

Lara then landed a lucrative contract with Warwickshire and marked his debut season in English county cricket with a magical spell between April and June in which he struck eight centuries in 11 first-class innings.

That golden phase included a monumental 501 not out against Durham which surpassed Hanif Mohammad's 499 as the highest score ever made in first-class cricket.

During last year's tour of England, Lara peaked in the last three Tests with scores of 87, 145, 152 and 179, a sequence in which his power, timing and range of strokes were complemented by his perfect placement of the ball.

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Lara gets into his stride

BRIDGETOWN, Barbados, Jan 29: Baiting maestro Brian Lara stroked 119 for Trinidad and Tobago on Sunday in the second innings of his first match since controversially withdrawing from West Indies' tour of Australia last month, reports Reuter.

Lara lifted Trinidad to 255 for six in pursuit of their victory target of 301 against Barbados at the close of the third-day of the four-day match in Point-a-Pierre.

Left-handed Lara, who has been named in West Indies' final squad of 14 for next month's World Cup, reached three figures in 202 minutes, and struck 13 fours and a six. He made 77 in the first innings.

After a cautious start, Lara soon got into his stride, stroking the ball to all parts of the field on way of his 27th first-class century.

Fiery paceman Patterson Thompson removed Lara, inducing the batsman to pull a ball into the hands of Floyd Reifer on the square leg boundary.

Test fast bowlers Curtly Ambrose (3-11) and Kenny Benjamin (3-50) swept the Leeward Islands to victory over the Windward Islands by an innings and seven runs with a day and two sessions to spare in Anguilla.

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Abedi's Nations' Cup dream suffers a jolt

PORT ELIZABETH, Jan 29: Abedi Pele, who missed the 1992 African Nations' Cup final through suspension, could miss out if Ghana reach the final again after badly spraining his ankle in his side's 1-0 quarterfinal win over Zaire on Sunday, reports Reuter.

The Ghanaian captain has been ruled out of Wednesday's semifinal against South Africa and if his team win that match he will face an uphill battle to be fit if Ghana make the final.

Although there is no break, Ghana spokesman Vusi Kama, confirmed that Pele and Brazilian coach Ismael Kurtiz had ruled the player out of Wednesday's match in the hope that he may recover in time for the final on Saturday, should Ghana beat the host nation.

"It is badly sprained and the team management said they have no option but to rest Abedi. They can only hope that the team can win without him and that he can recover in time for the final," Kama said.

Pele was named man-of-the-match after his team's narrow victory at the Boet Erasmus Stadium and was responsible for setting up striker Tony Yeboah's winning goal.

But instead of being able to relax and look forward to the semifinal, Pele must have been reminded of 1992 when he inspired Ghana to the final against the Ivory Coast, only to miss the match because of two yellow cards during the competition. Ghana duly lost the final 1-1 on penalties after a 0-0 draw.

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England's Hazlitt (R) and Belgium's Vanhemelen fight for the possession of the ball during their match of the Atlanta '96 Olympic hockey qualifying tournament in Barcelona on January 28. — AFP/UNB photo

Canadians smell a rat

BARCELONA, Jan 29: Canada's hockey coach has called for an inquiry into India's 0-0 draw with Malaysia which clinched the final Olympic Games berth for Malaysia at the expense of the Canadians on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Eight-times Olympic champions India gave a performance which "disgusted" their own coach Cedric Pereira as they were held by Malaysia, the fifth-ranked Asian side, in their final game of the 10-day qualifying tournament.

The draw put Malaysia into the Atlanta Games, rendering academic Canada's later 7-1 defeat of Belarus.

Canada's coach Shiaz Virje, Kenyan-born of Indian parents, was highly critical of the India-Malaysia game, agreed by observers to be one of the most boring international games ever.

Virje said: "The International Hockey Federation should call for an inquiry to prove that they are in charge of this game."

"We were taught that honesty was the essence of the Olympic ideal."

With India's commitment to beating Malaysia under question, coach Pereira told an earlier news conference: "If there is an iota of truth in what is being said outside this I will resign immediately."

"Our performance was miserable, disgusting, disgraceful. My players were totally unfocused."

Malaysia had packed their defence throughout the match and India rarely penetrated to their circle in a game played at slow pace.

The main action came from the Canadian supporters

who first shouted for India and then barracked them. India were also slow-handclapped in the second half by a large section of the crowd.

There was just one penalty corner in the entire match, forced by Malaysia's Nor Saiful in the 17th minute. His shot was comfortably saved.

India's only assault on the Malaysia goal came when inside left Sajeev Kumar hit a reverse stick shot into the side-netting.

The draw cost India top spot after the Netherlands

later beat Spain 2-1 in the final game of the tournament.

The Indians finished second on goal difference. The other three qualifiers are Malaysia, Spain and Britain.

Britain completed an unbeaten run with a 2-0 win over Belgium. Calum Giles scoring two second-half corner goals.

Later, Els Van Breda-Vriesman, secretary-general of the International Hockey Federation (FIH), said they had received no official complaint, but she had met representatives of the Canadian team.

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The world Lara's oyster

PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Jan 29 (Reuter): A millionaire at 26, a household name and cricket's biggest draw-card, Brian Lara would seem to have the world at his feet.

Yet the Trinidadian left-hander, who smashed Test and first-class individual batting records in 1994, is enduring a troubled phase in his career which at one stage threatened his whole sporting future.

A dressing room confrontation with Richie Richardson during West Indies' tour of England last year was the catalyst, prompting Lara's much-publicised walk-out after accusing his captain of not instilling discipline into the team.

Lara was persuaded to re-join the squad by Peter Short, the president of West Indies Cricket Board of Control (WICBC), but fresh problems arose after the player returned home.

He was fined by the WICBC for misconduct during the tour, a punishment that prompted Lara to make a late withdrawal from the team's tour of Australia last month.

Lara took a break from the game, but now claims to be refreshed and has been named in the final squad of 14 for the World Cup, responding to his inclusion by "restarting his commitment to West Indies cricket."

Born in the tiny village of Cantaro, upper Santa Cruz, in north Trinidad on May 2, 1969, Lara revealed his prowess and passion for the game at an early age.

A product of the Harvard Club coaching clinic and Fa-

cent 277 out of a total of 606, which proved to be the turning point of the series. West Indies, 1-0 down at that state, went on to win it 2-1.

That innings, notable for its imperious strokeplay and great powers of concentration, was the prelude to his record-breaking year of 1994.

Against England in the Caribbean he piled up 798 runs in the five-Test series, crowning his achievements in the final game at St John's, Antigua, by amassing 375 to break Sir Gary Sobers' 36-year-old record Test score of 365 not out.

Lara then landed a lucrative contract with Warwickshire and marked his debut season in English county cricket with a magical spell between April and June in which he struck eight centuries in 11 first-class innings.

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