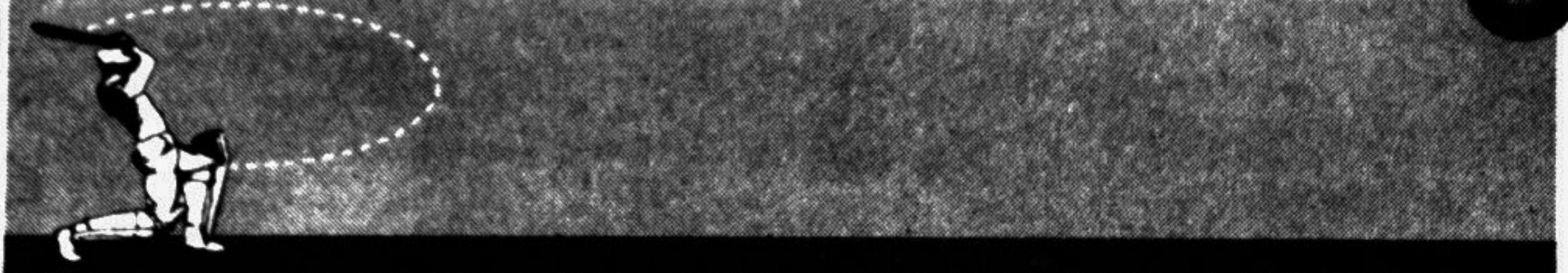


The World Cup with Philips



Not just live. Alive.

Hall's humble confession

HYDERABAD, India, Feb 15: West Indies' manager Wesley Hall, as quick now with a quip as he once was with a cricket ball, freely acknowledges his side are not one of the World Cup favourites, reports Reuter.

"We are very cognisant of the fact that West Indies and Zimbabwe are not firm favourites to win anything," Hall said at a reception for the team on Wednesday night.

"In the newspapers that I read and the views coming from great players of the past, West Indies are not considered favourites."

"I am thinking that we (West Indies and Zimbabwe) are going to have a nice little game on our own."

Hall, a former Test star who never played limited-overs cricket during his career in the sixties, however believes the current side has the potential to regain past glory.

"If we play to the standard we are capable of, we will be very focussed," Hall said.

He scotched speculation about dissensions in the team over Brian Lara's refusal to tour Australia earlier this year, adding the West Indies were not over-dependent on the master batsman.

"Brian is a great player and we are happy to have the best batsman is the world on our side, but one brilliant player cannot do everything. In one-day cricket you have to have utility players and all-rounders," Hall said.

Row over territory

ISLAMABAD, Feb 15: Pakistan on Thursday protested to India for claiming the disputed Kashmir state as part of its territory during the cricket World Cup opening ceremony, a foreign office spokesman said, reports AFP.

He said Indian high commissioner Sateesh Chander was summoned by foreign secretary Najmuddin Sheikh to be told the Indian move at an international event was a "contradiction" of a position taken by the United Nations as well as entire international community on Kashmir.

The northern Himalayan state was shown as part of India at a laser show in Calcutta during Sunday's opening ceremony of the World Cup, being jointly hosted by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Sheikh also handed over a UN map showing Jammu and Kashmir as disputed territory, stating that the final status of the dispute had not been agreed upon.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence in 1947, two of them over Kashmir where more than 12,000 people have died in a Muslim separatist drive since 1989.

India accuses Pakistan of arming and training the militants. Pakistan denies the charge but admits giving political and diplomatic support.

Seles writes her sob-story

NEW YORK, Feb 15: Monica Seles has written an autobiography about her struggle to return to tennis glory after being stabbed, a book to be published in June and entitled "Monica: My Journey from Fear to Victory," reports AFP.

Seles won the Australian Open title and remains ranked co-number one under a special medical exemption by the WTA Tour. She came back last July after missing more than two years because of the 1993 attack.

"It is both exciting and challenging to be writing a book about my experiences," Seles said. "I was flattered to be asked, and I hope the story will help other people face, and overcome, obstacles in their lives."

Dosedel dumps Kafelnikov

MARSEILLE, France, Feb 15: Top seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov made a first round exit from the Marseille Open on Wednesday when he was downed 6-4, 6-4 by Slava Dosedel of the Czech Republic, reports Reuter.

Dosedel, ranked 65th in the world, took full advantage of numerous unforced errors by the Russian to win the match and Kafelnikov admitted his mistakes caused his downfall.

"Dosedel's game never really gave me problems," he said. "I know I'm better in all departments of the game."

"But I played on clay in Italy last Sunday and I did not have enough time to adapt to the surface which is twice as fast here. That's why I made so many errors."

Akram, his idol & rival



LAHORE, Feb 15: Wasim Akram has a burning ambition — to emulate the feat of his idol Imran Khan and lead World Cup holders Pakistan to victory in the current tournament.

"Imran has been and will remain my hero," the Pakistani captain told Reuters in an interview. "Though I've been described as his successor... I have to win the cup to match his achievements."

The 29-year-old all-rounder was a major force in Pakistan's World Cup-winning side in Australia four years ago under Imran's captaincy.

In the exciting final against England at Melbourne, he hammered 33 off 19 deliveries and took three wickets for 49, dismissing Allan Lamb and Chris Lewis with successive deliveries, to win the "man-of-the-match" award.

His tally of 18 wickets made him the tournament's most successful bowler.

A gentle person of the field, Akram, is a formidable opponent on the field and can quickly influence the outcome of a Test or one-day tournament last year.

He admits he has learned from the harrowing experience of being ousted from the captaincy.

tron tour of the West Indies. Along with Waqar Younis, Aaqib Javed and Mushtaq Ahmed, he was hauled in by Grenada police for allegedly possessing marijuana — a charge vigorously denied by the players.

Not surprisingly, he was dumped from the captaincy for the 1993-94 tour of New Zealand when his colleagues

"Miandad is the kind of player who has the capacity to change the fortunes of the side on his own. His ability as a batsman had never been questioned," said Akram.

Although Pakistan lost the three-Test series on their recent tour to Australia, victory in the Sydney Test did much to salvage their pride.

Pakistan then went on to win the one-off Test against New Zealand at Auckland and share the four-match one-day series.

Akram deserves a good measure of credit for unifying the team but he refuses to accept any acclaim. "That the team is united is in itself a reward," he said.

On Pakistan's prospects of retaining the World Cup, Akram said: "We've a pretty solid team and I think that our chances of retaining the title are as bright as ever."

The morale of the players is high and since we are playing on the home grounds that is an added advantage."

The left-arm fast bowler is on the verge of reaching the 300-wicket mark in one-day internationals. He has already taken 282 wickets in 193 games.

expressed lack of faith in him.

But Akram was re-appointed captain after Pakistan suffered a humiliating defeat in a home series against Sri Lanka and went down at Sharjah in a one-day tournament last year.

The man of the match was Imran Khan, who made his debut at the end of 1993, is still developing as a right-arm fast-medium bowler.

Streak, whose father

played for Rhodesia, also

wields a wide lower-order bat.

And Zimbabwe will be looking for all the help they can get after former skipper David Houghton, who scored a century in the side's historic first Test against India four years ago, missed the Cup with a broken bone in his foot.

Kapil Dev retired from Test cricket in 1994 with a record 434 wickets.

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