

Column One

DID U' KNOW?

(The Professor does)

THAT the final is definitely the worst time to score a naught. That did not stop five English batsmen from doing (or not doing?) just that in the 1979 World Cup final at Lord's.

SPORTS TALK



Richie Richardson

(Former West Indian captain)

"We had no business to lose this match. We were winning comfortably, and all we needed to do was to play straight and keep the wickets intact. But it did not happen. I rate Warner as the best bowler in the world, but even he did not take the match away from us. We lost it."

(Commenting on his team's World Cup semifinal defeat to Australia by 5 runs.)

Sports WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports WHIZZ KID competition-31

Tick the Correct Answer

(Competition closes: 8 p.m. Mar 29, 1996)

- 1. In the 1996 World Cup, Sri Lankan Aravinda de Silva won the man-of-the-match awards 3 times, 4 times, 5 times
2. Former Wimbledon champion Pat Cash is Swedish, English, Australian
3. Tyson regained the WBC heavyweight crown defeating Bruno, Bowe, Buster
4. The present Metropolis chess league champions are Mohammedan SC, Biman, Ansars
5. Number of centuries scored in 1996 World Cup were 14, 15, 16

Name:
Class: Roll No:
School Address:
Phone: (if any)

Diego the boxer!

BUENOS AIRES, Mar 28: Diego Maradona will swap soccer boots for boxing gloves to fight a former world champion in an exhibition fight next week, reports Reuter.

"It's not a serious fight," Maradona's opponent, former World Boxing Association flyweight champion Santos Laciari said on Wednesday.

PHF to oppose FIH move

ISLAMABAD, Mar 28: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has warned it will strongly oppose any move at the International Hockey Federation (FIH) to introduce hockey sticks made of metal or synthetic material, reports AFP.

Singer Cup in Dhaka?

Sports Reporter



The Singer Cup will undoubtedly be hot stuff for the cricketing fraternity of the sub-continent including millions of Bangladeshis when the three-nation tourney begins in Singapore on April 1.

And especially after the phenomenal rise of Sri Lanka, who like a dance-hall cutpurse hummed each and everyone by winning the recently concluded World Cup, the tournament which also includes traditional foes - India and Pakistan - will offer an unprecedented three-way heady battle instead of the usual dual confrontation.

But the tourney involving the sub-continental nations could have been a more sub-continental affair in the sub-continent had the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board (BCCB) latched on to the organisers' proposal to hold the meet in Dhaka.

According to informed sources, the tournament organising committee offered the BCCB to hold meet involving three Test-playing countries in Dhaka. The written proposal was submitted to the BCCB in 1994.

"We received a proposal way back in 1994", confirmed Amrul Hossain, the general secretary of the BCCB. "But the Board had turned down the proposal on various reasons", claimed Moni.

While elaborating Moni added that the organising committee had offered the BCCB to allot them the ground but had declined to put the show on under the banner of the Board.

"Besides, there was no such instance that any Board allowing a purely commercial organisation to hold such an event.

We had also requested the organisers to allow us more authority so that the tournament could be held jointly", said the BCCB general secretary.

When asked whether the matter was discussed in the Board meeting in presence of its president ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Moni said, "It was a collective decision and the president shared the same view along with the other members".

Replying to a query Moni said, "The matter was not disclosed to the press because it was then only at a preliminary stage".

But, when asked why had the BCCB played hide-and-seek about the proposal, the rejection of which should have been discussed more openly, Moni, without a second thought, in defence claimed that the matter was not that sensitive.

It was also learnt that the tournament would have been a financial bonanza for the BCCB whom the organisers offered a lucrative amount as levy. When asked how much the organisers had offered the BCCB for staging the meet in Dhaka, Moni was reluctant to reply.

He was also unable to provide information about the text of the proposal.

Instead he said, "We did not consider how much we will get for allowing them to use the ground. I think it is unethical. What we wanted was more authority and involvement". He did not elaborate any further.

On the other hand Saber Hossain Chowdhury, one of the organisers of the aforesaid tournament, when contacted over telephone said, "If you ask me whether this (Singer) is the tournament we had proposed to the BCCB then my reply is in the negative."

But when asked if the Singer Cup is the brain-child of the original proposal, Saber

Hossain, a leading businessman of the country, said "You can say so".

"I think it is a dead issue now. I want to forget that episode," added Saber Hossain, who like the general secretary of the BCCB seemed reluctant to provide more information.

Saber Hossain, who is also a vice-president of the BCCB, said, "Let's think about the future. I will not blame anyone for what has happened. Besides, I respect the Board's decision".

"We are a commercial organisation trying to promote cricket all over the world. We would have been happy to have organised a tournament of such an international calibre in Dhaka", added Saber.

Perhaps all is not lost yet because the BCCB, according to Saber, is trying to stage an international tournament later in the year to mark the 25th anniversary of the country's independence.

But many believe that what the BCCB had decided was nothing but a 'Hobson's choice'.

It may be mentioned here that the Singer Cup is now being held under the banner of the Singapore Cricket Association.

Had the Singer organisers and BCCB agreed on Dhaka as the venue, Bangladesh would have been put on the world's cricketing map for good; Dhaka would have been synonymous with Sharjah. Our youngsters, starved of quality cricket, would have reaped rich from witnessing live performances of the masters of the game. It is the firm belief of many sports enthusiasts in the country that both the BCCB and the organisers, some of whom are Bangladeshis, should have tried heart and soul to have staged the meet in Dhaka.

Court sings Krabbe's tune

BONN, Mar 28: Former world sprint champion Katrin Krabbe has been granted the right to sue the international Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) in a case which has major repercussions for the federation's four-year doping bans, reports Reuter.

A civil Munich court ruled today that Krabbe could sue the IAAF for a 1993 drugs ban and said the German legal system could intervene in IAAF decisions.

Four-year bans are illegal under German law and German Athletics Federation (DLV) lawyer Clemens Prokop said the decision effectively meant athletics officials could no longer impose doping bans of more than two years on German athletes.

The court ruled that it can make rulings on IAAF decisions and an athlete has the right to sue the IAAF in Germany," Prokop told Reuters. "The consequence of that is that it will be very difficult to have doping bans of more than two years in the future here."

Krabbe, the 1991 double world sprint champion, is not expected to run again and is unlikely to gain much money from her case.

McMillan stuns Surrey

LONDON, Mar 28: Surrey said Wednesday they were stunned that South African Brian McMillan, widely regarded as the best all-rounder in the world, pulled out of his two-year contract with the English county, reports AFP.

Dr Ali Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, informed the Oval that McMillan would be withdrawing from his contract.

Surrey cricket manager David Gilbert said, "We are devastated at this news at such a later stage. We feel very let down as we had a signed contract with the player himself and were given assurances that he was free to join us for two seasons."

Lloyd Ily's likely successor

LONDON, Mar 28: David Lloyd of Lancashire, one of the most popular figures on the county circuit, remained favourite for the England coaching job on Wednesday, reports AFP.

Lord's bosses spent the day trying to thrash out terms with those on their short-list and with the countries that employ them and they hope to announce the new coach on Friday.

Russians not taking any chances

MOSCOW, Mar 28: Russia is considering following Germany's example by taking their own meat to England during Juve's European soccer championship because of the furore over 'mad cow' disease in Britain, an official said on Wednesday.

"The disease worries us," Nikita Simonyan, vice-president of Russia's soccer union, told Reuters by telephone.

"We are thinking of taking some foodstuffs with us after we learned that the Germans were planning to do. But in principle, British foodstuffs are of superior quality as well as their cooks," he added.

He said officials were considering what action to take, including the possibility of taking a team cook.

Botha loses his belt

NEWARK, New Jersey, Mar 28: Heavyweight contender Axel Schulz lost to Francois Botha in the ring, but prevailed in court, reports AP.



Former Pakistan skipper and heart-throb of many on the distaff side Imran Khan, witnessing the Dubai World Cup horse race along with his wife Haiqa and the local organisers on March 27. 'Cigar', the 1995 American horse of the year, won the 4 million US dollar Cup. - AFP/UNB photo

WI-NZ 2nd ODI today



PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, Mar 28: Despite beating New Zealand by a wicket in the first of the one-day internationals on Tuesday the West Indies still have problems to sort out before the double header here on Friday and Saturday, reports AFP.

Though there is concern at the way New Zealand's lower order were able to hammer the attack after the hard part of removing the specialist batsmen had been achieved, the main problem lies in the consistent failure of their middle order.

Jimmy Adams and Roland Holder have not played a significant innings or built a big partnership since they saved the West Indies in the last one-day international against Australia in Guyana last year.

The selectors are toying with the idea of replacing both of them with opening batsman Philo Wallace and all-rounder Laurie Williams, the latter would give them an extra bowling option.

However, Wallace's inclusion would split up the openers, one partnership that succeeded against New Zealand. Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Stuart Williams.

The selectors regard Chanderpaul's steadiness an advantage in the middle order, something that a year ago Adams was renowned for.

Stamps on SL WC heroes

COLOMBO, Mar 28: Sri Lankan cricketers who won the World Cup by beating Australia will soon appear on postage stamps, an official said Wednesday, reports AP.

One of the four planned stamps will be of the World Cup trophy, while the others will be an artist's impressions of the cricketers, said H. Kumarsinghe, director of the Philatelic Bureau.

The Bureau has sought government approval for the stamps and will soon call for worldwide tenders for the printing, Kumarsinghe told The Associated Press.

"Usually one million stamps of each denomination are printed," said Kumarsinghe. The denominations of stamps, which should be out in two months, are yet to be finalised.

Adams though has not looked the same player since he fractured his cheekbone on the tour of England last year.

New Zealand are concerned by Nathan Astle and Craig Spearman's poor opening partnerships. One always makes runs but the early departure of the other means a baptism of fire for the number three against a still vibrant West Indies opening bowling attack.

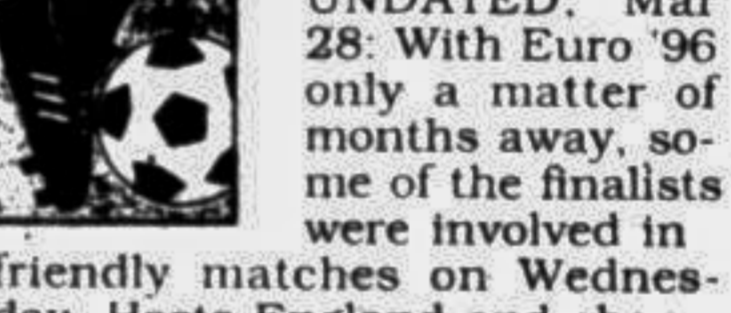
Though Dipak Patel and Adam Parore, their former wicketkeeper now turned batsman, saved the tourists from a humiliating score, the New Zealanders cannot rely on them everytime.

The tourists are also worried about how easily their lightweight bowling attack was not able to maintain the pressure on the West Indies when they were starting defeat in the face, at 197-8 in the 44th over.

Their options are limited so they will probably have to retain the same side for the two matches and hope that more of their batsmen perform.

The series is still wide open and New Zealand as they showed in parts of the World Cup are a good one-day side.

England beat Bulgaria



UNDATED, Mar 28: With Euro '96 only a matter of months away, some of the finalists were involved in friendly matches on Wednesday. Hosts England and champions Denmark came away with mixed results, reports Reuter.

England dominated the first half and gave a gritty performance in the second to deservingly beat fellow finalists Bulgaria 1-0 at Wembley.

The only goal of an absorbing match watched by a disappointing crowd of 29,000 came after seven minutes when Les Ferdinand chested down a superb 30-metre pass from man-of-the-match Teddy Sheringham to fire past Bulgarian captain and goalkeeper Borisav Mihalov, winning his 91st cap.

Bulgaria did have the ball in the net 20 seconds from time but the goal was disallowed after substitute Dael Borimorov was adjudged to have handled before Emil-Kostadinov scored.

Bulgaria, without their star player Hristo Stoitchev who aggravated a back muscle in training on Tuesday, came more into the game in the second half but rarely threatened David Seaman in the England goal.

Bulgaria, starting the match with seven players from the side that lost to Italy in the World Cup semifinals, were generally a shadow of the team that did so well in the United States two years ago.

England's still largely experimental side, marshalled in midfield by Paul Ince, playing

his first international for 13 months, and a rejuvenated Paul Gascoigne, carved through Bulgaria almost at will.

Only some outstanding saves from Mihalov in the first half and some bad luck in front of goal prevented England from turning round three or four goals ahead.

Ferdinand hit the post just before halftime. Sheringham saw his powerful shot on the turn tipped away by Mihalov and also headed narrowly wide, while both Steve Macnaman and Ferdinand were foiled at the last moment by the goalkeeper.

At the other end England goalkeeper David Seaman did not have a serious save to make until the 88th minute when Kostadinov fired straight at him after a rare break through the England back four.

Bulgarian coach Dimitar Penev made three changes at halftime with Boncho Genchev replacing Goshko Ganchev, Borimorov replacing Ivaylo Jordanov and Dimitar Popov taking over from Mihalov in goal. Bulgaria immediately looked more impressive, at least in their approach work. Even though a playmaker Yordan Lechkov, also began to make more impression by coming deeper and spraying the ball around to the wide men, Bulgaria still rarely threatened Seaman. But they made England work harder in the middle.

Striker Oliver Bierhoff struck two goals in only his second international as Germany beat European champions Denmark 2-0 in Munich.

The Italy-based player, who won his first cap last month as

a substitute in a friendly in Portugal, showed composure to tap the ball home from close range in the 44th minute after a superb run and cross from the left from midfielder Christian Ziege.

In the 61st minute the 27-year-old Udinese striker got his head to a free kick by Thomas Haessler and the ball found its way through the legs of Danish keeper Peter Schmeichel into the net.

The performance will give Bierhoff a major boost in his bid to get the second place up front alongside Jurgen Klinsmann at the championship.

The Germans, who were beaten 2-0 by the Danes in the 1992 final in Gothenburg, showed good form in the run-up to the championship despite being without key libero Matthias Sammer and midfielder playmaker Andy Moeller.

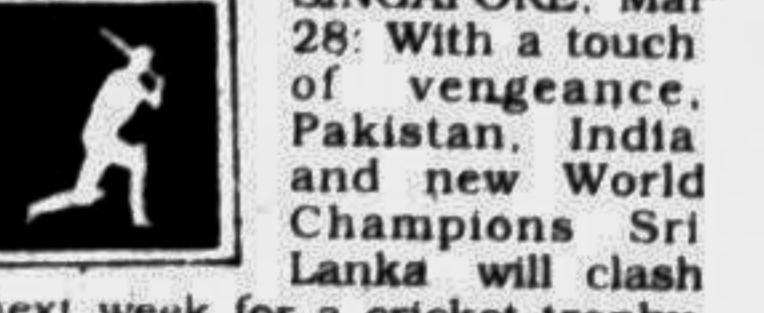
Dragan Stojkovic scored early in the second half to give Yugoslavia a 1-0 victory over Romania in a friendly played in freezing rain in Belgrade.

Stojkovic, who plays for Nagoya Grampus Eight in the Japanese league, scored from a free-kick in the 51st minute and that proved enough to win the match.

Romania had better of the first half but could not beat goalkeeper Kocic, the only man in the Yugoslav starting line-up who plays for a Yugoslavia club.

Yugoslav defender Budimir Vujacic, who plays for Sporting Lisbon in the Portuguese First Division, was taken to hospital after sustaining injury in the second half.

Cricket's new rendezvous



SINGAPORE, Mar 28: With a touch of vengeance, Pakistan, India and new World Champions Sri Lanka will clash next week for a cricket trophy on one of Asia's oldest playgrounds, reports AP.

The three-nation Singer Cup will be played on the Padang, an expanse of emerald turf that has been Singapore's favourite sporting junction since Sir Stamford Raffles first arrived on this tiny island in 1819 to claim it for the British.

Cricket was first played on the Padang as early as 1837; when the European community was barely 100 strong.

Over the years, the Padang has also cradled death during war and hosted the joy of freedom.

With the 119-year-old clubhouse of the Singapore Cricket Club adorning one end of the Padang, it is today an island of rare colonial charm in a sea of modernity.

The round robin Singer Cup is the first international cricket tournament after the World Cup, which Sri Lanka won on March 17. Captain Arjuna Ranatunga will want to prove here that his team's success was not a fluke.

wearied soldiers packing the ground were bombed to death. Some say that soldiers still lie buried beneath the Padang.

Today, however, Singapore's efficient and clean underground commuter train runs under the ground and towers of blocks of offices and banks that form Singapore's majestic skyline, proclaiming the city-state's economic success.

On the other side is the Raffles City complex, which includes the world's tallest hotel, the 73-story Westin Stamford, offices and shopping mall, one of the hundreds littering Singapore.

Half of the Padang is leased to the Singapore Cricket Club and the other half by the Singapore recreation Club, whose new club house is being built at the far end.

The rectangular ground has been a arena of fencing in line with a government decree aimed at giving all Singaporeans equal access and right of passage to the Padang. National day celebrations to mark Singapore's independence also are held here.

The Padang wicket, the only grass turf in Singapore, was relaid about 18 months ago and is generally recognised as an excellent pitch," said Chris Pianca, deputy president of the Singapore Cricket Association.

The earliest official match on the Padang was played on Oct. 14 1852 between 'A' Picked Eleven' and the newly formed 'The Club,' the precursor to the Singapore Cricket Club.

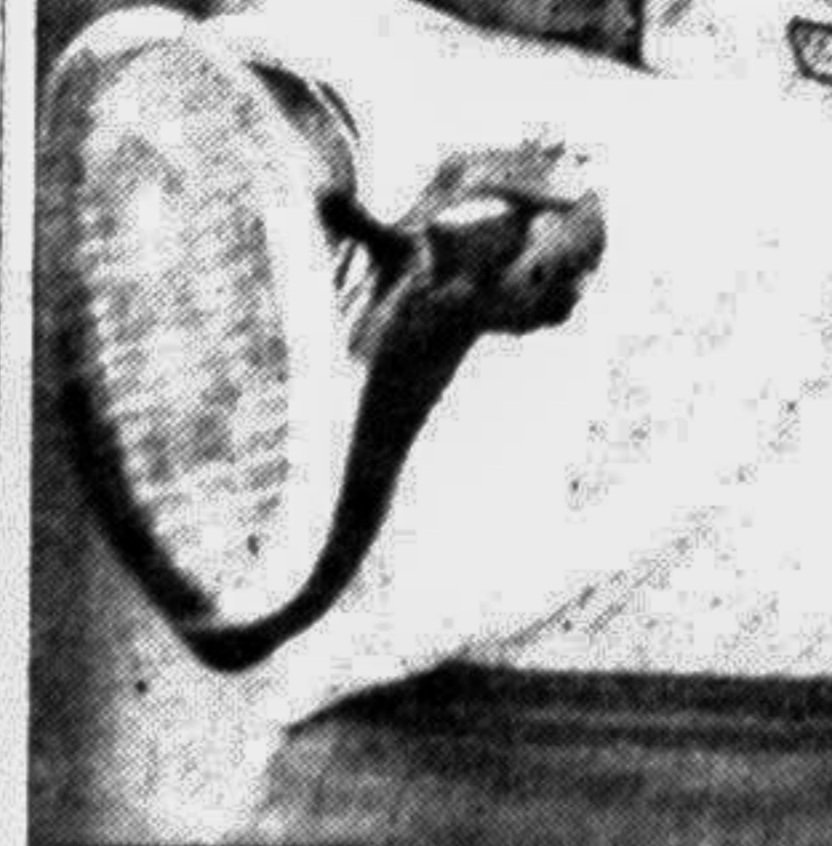
The Club playing with nine players won, making 14 and 12 while the Picked Eleven - actually comprising six players - made 11 and 1 in the two innings.

Cricket, always a colonial game, faded when Singapore won independence in 1965 as people turned to nation building and moneymaking.

It is now making a comeback with the help of expatriate professional Indians and Australians who have spurred many of Singapore's majority Chinese to take to the game.

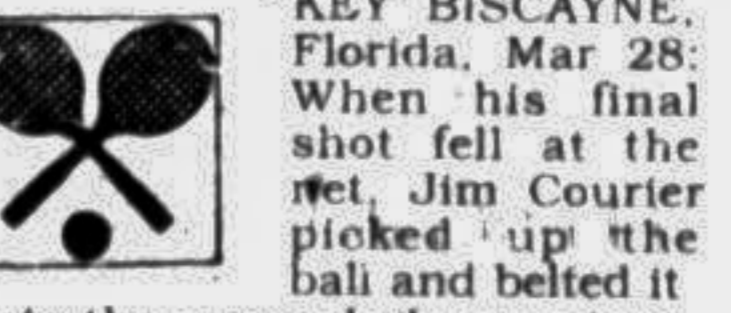
But for cricket to take roots in schools, it will have to be made more attractive with short games and coloured clothing, said Ilsa Sharp, author of 'The Singapore Cricket Club.'

"Only that can make it more attractive to young Singaporeans whose attention span appears to be of five minutes in this age of high-tech gadgetry," she said in an interview.



Chanda Rubin, a rising star of the United States, makes a forehand return during her quarterfinal engagement of the Lipton Championships against Argentina's Gabriela Sabatini in Key Biscayne, Florida on March 27. Rubin won the match 6-3, 5-7, 6-3. - AFP/UNB photo

Courier, Sabatini exit



KEY BISCAIYNE, Florida, Mar 28: When his final shot fell at the feet of Jim Courier, Sabatini picked up the ball and belted it into the upper deck, punctuating his long frustrating afternoon.

Courier knew he blew too many big points Wednesday in a 7-6 (7-3), 2-6, 7-5 quarterfinal loss to Arnaud Boetsch at the Lipton Championships, reports AP.

"Put it in perspective?" Courier seethed. "There's life, and there's tennis. There's your perspective. Don't dig too much for the story. It's right there."

semifinals since Yannick Noah in 1989. On Friday he'll play No 3 Andre Agassi, who beat unseeded Michael Joyce 6-4, 6-1 Wednesday night.

For Courier, who has climbed from 13th to eighth in the computer rankings since the start of the year, the loss halted early-season momentum.

"I was a little bit lucky," said Boetsch, ranked 17th. "He got a bit mad at that, especially at the end."

Courier converted only four of 20 break-point chances, compared with Boetsch's 3-for-3. Courier squandered a set point in the first set when he hit a forehand wide and also wasted a 3-1 lead in the tiebreaker, losing the final four points on unforced errors.

As Courier's frustration grew in the third set, his face reddened with anger. He swiped at the air with his racket and whacked a ball into the 10th row.

Boetsch broke for a 6-5 lead thanks to consecutive errant ground strokes by Courier. On match point, after 2 hours, 41 minutes of tennis, Boetsch hit a deep crosscourt forehand that Courier returned into the net.

Boetsch, who turns 27 Monday, enjoyed his best year in 1995 and finished as France's No. 1 player for the first time. He started this year 1-4 but made a breakthrough in the Lipton by beating Mali-Vai Washington and Stefan Edberg. He had been 0-4 against Washington and 0-10 against Edberg.

Rubin, seeking her first WTA tour title, ousted Sabatini in 2 1/2 hours. The 20-year-old from Louisiana squandered three match points in the second set and two more in the final set before closing out the victory when Sabatini hit a backhand wide.

"I felt like at the end I was aggressive when I needed to be and kept pressure on her," Rubin said.

Top seed Steffi Graf will play No 8 Lindsay Davenport in the other women's semifinal on Thursday.