

## Column One

## SPORTS TALK



Sanath Jayasuriya

(Explosive Sri Lankan opening batsman)

"Though I had opened for my country in 20-odd matches in the past I was confident enough in this role only after my 112 in Adelaide. The team feels that I have a role to play. And I indeed feel obliged to do so."

On his brilliant success rate as an opener.

## Sports

## WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Scissors icon

Sports WHIZZ KID competition-36

✓ Tick the Correct Answer

(Competition closes: 8 p.m. May 10, 1996)



ROME, Apr 26: For AC Milan, it's simple: Beat Fiorentina, claim the Italian League title.

Holding a seven-point lead with three games left, Milan have virtually sewn up other fourth championship in five years and can make it official by winning in Sunday's 32nd round, regardless of what second place Juventus does at A S Roma, reports AP.

If and when Milan clinch the title, coach Paolo Capello is to announce whether he will return for next season or, as widely reported, jump to Spanish club Real Madrid.

It would be fitting if the Red-and-Black wrapped things up against visiting Fiorentina, the club that raised the strongest challenge much of the year.

When Argentine star Gabriel Batistuta was scoring at a prolific pace, the Fiorentines moved into second place and were one point behind Milan at the season's midpoint.

But the striker is currently mired in a slump that has seen him tally just twice in his last seven Serie A matches as Fiorentina dropped to third place. After playing in Argentina's 3-1 win over Bolivia Wednesday (and scoring once), Batistuta won't be on the field at San Siro Stadium.

Neither will his partner Francesco Balano or veteran defender Michele Serena, both out injured.

Milan are completely healthy for just about the first time this season. Its top for-

wards — Golden Ball winners George Weah of Liberia and Roberto Baggio plus Montenegrin playmaker Dejan Savicevic — will start against the suspect Fiorentina defense.

Savicevic, troubled all year by a series of leg injuries, scored twice in Yugoslavia's 3-1 win over the Faeroe Islands Wednesday, the nation's first official game in 4 1/2 years.

Milan's perennially stingy defense is again Italy's best, having allowed 18 goals through 30 games. Despite that success, Milan are looking to replace unheralded goalkeeper Sebastiano Rossi. The successor could be Argentina's Francesco Toldo who's a backup for the Italian national side.

Toldo has said he'll go to whichever team offers more money.

Juventus play fifth-place Roma at Olympic Stadium, the site of their Champions' League final clash with Ajax Amsterdam May 22.

Since even a win Sunday would not necessarily keep alive 'chances for a repeat league title, Juve are not likely to risk key players.

A cause for concern is Italian international goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi's strained right hamstring, the same injury that kept him out of Juve's final eight league games and the Italian Cup final last season. His status is in doubt for the Ajax encounter, as well as June's European Championships.

Michelangelo Rampulla.

wards — Golden Ball winners George Weah of Liberia and Roberto Baggio plus Montenegrin playmaker Dejan Savicevic — will start against the suspect Fiorentina defense.

In addition, regulars Fabrizio Ravanelli and Alessandro Del Piero in attack and Alessio Tacchinardi and Sergio Porri on defense won't be in the starting lineup.

Roma want a win to help their UEFA Cup qualification chances, but may have to do without as many as four key foreigners who were with national teams this week: Brazilian defender Adair, Swedish midfielder Jonas Thern, and forwards Abel Balbo of Argentina and Daniel Fonseca of Uruguay.

Another important match in the UEFA hunt sees Vicenza, ninth of 18 clubs, host fourth-place AC Parma.

Parma's key forwards, Gianfranco Zola and Bulgarian Golden Ball winner Hristo Stoichkov, are out, replaced by Alessandro Melli and Ferdinand Piro, the 18-year-old called up from Parma's junior team who scored his first career goal last round.

Vicenza sweeper Giovanni Lopez is hurt and won't dress for the game.

At the other end of the standings, 14th-place Piacenza get to play last place Padova, who are already assured of relegation to Serie B.

If Piacenza win both Torino (17th) and Cremonese (16th) — who face off at Turin Sunday — will be demoted.

Other games: Atalanta-Lazio; Bari-Udinese; Cagliari-Internazionale; and Napoli-Sampdoria.

## A TRIBUTE

## Kardar — charismatic cricketer

By Tawfiq Aziz Khan

Ali Khan Mohammad, Amir Elahi, Nazar Mohammad and others who formed the nucleus of the Pakistan cricket team. They would occasionally play unofficial Test matches against the West Indies and the MCC whenever the occasion afforded.

One such match was played in 1951 at Karachi against the Nigel Howard-led MCC, which was on a tour of India. I still remember our sitting room filled with elderly cricket lovers clustering around my father and almost hiding the tall radio set from view eagerly listening to the running commentary. Pakistan was on the verge of victory as Maqsood Ahmad slowly walked on to the matting wicket, took his guard and notched up the required runs for victory. Pakistan won the unofficial Test by four wickets. India proposed MCC seconded and Pakistan became the 7th permanent member of Imperial Cricket Conference

team in India. The Statesman printed the thumb-nail sketches of the Pakistan cricketers along with their individual pictures. It was a great gift for all of us because prior to that we had very little idea about the appearances of the cricketers. I made it a point to slip it from the paper and paste it on the wall behind the radio so that all of us may have a view of the player while listening to the commentary.

Fortunately for us, all the five Test matches were covered ball-by-ball in English by All India Radio.

Pakistan were beaten comprehensively by India in their first official Test match at Delhi. This was India's first win since 1932 when it became a member of the ICC. The second Test at Lucknow proved the superiority of Pakistan. Kardar led his team to their first ever Test victory, the architect being Nazar Mo-

Nasirul Ghani, Haseeb Ahsan, Khalid Baudullah and Khalid Hasan.

On the three tours that Kardar led the Pakistan team, India 1952-53, England 1954 and the West Indies 1957-58, the Pakistanis under his clever leadership won at least one Test against those countries.

At home in 1956 Pakistan defeated Australia handsomely at Karachi in their first outing and in 1956-57 home series Pakistan defeated New Zealand. This was an unique achievement for Pakistan under Kardar, beating five other countries at least once in the first series which till today has not been achieved by any other country.

Pakistan did not play against South Africa because there was no diplomatic ties between the two countries.

A highly sophisticated and educated person, Kardar wrote books on the tours. First, he wrote "Test Status On Trial" after the tour of India in 1953, the second one "Cricket on the Cross-roads" after the tour of England in 1954 and "Green Shadows" after the tour of the West Indies in 1958.

Kardar became the Chairman of the selection committee in 1959 when the West Indians paid a return visit to Pakistan. The second test was played in Dhaka. I remember Musa Bhai [A B M Musa, former news editor of the then Pakistan Observer] and I went to the Tejgaon airport in a brand new van of the paper to receive Kardar and lodge him at Hotel Shahbagh. On the way back from the airport, Kardar pulled out a book from his bag and presented it to me. It was a copy of the "Green Shadows" which till today is one of my proud possessions.

Any tribute to Kardar is incomplete without a reference to the historic Oval victory in 1954. It was Pakistan's first full tour of England. Although the first match against Worcestershire was played in bright sunshine the summer gained notoriety for its wetness as the season progressed. The first Test at Lord's was almost a washout. The second Test at Nottingham was a nightmare for Pakistan. The third at Manchester — saved by rain. But the fourth at the Oval, a rain-interrupted test, is historic. Pakistan pulled off a thrilling victory over England, the first by any country against the home side on their maiden tour. The achievement is still there to be surpassed.

The Wisden Book of Test Captains eulogises Kardar thus: "Kardar's contribution lay most in what his stature did towards welding the players into a fine team capable of holding their own in any condition."

Kardar was one of the four subcontinental players who represented two countries in Tests. Others are: Amir Elahi (India & Pakistan), Gul Mohammad (India & Pakistan), and Nawab of Pataudi Sr. (England and India). Kardar's name will always be remembered with reverence in the annals of cricket.

## TEST CAREER STATS

Born Lahore 17 January 1925. Died: Lahore April 21, 1996. Played in 26 Tests as left-hand batsman & slow medium left arm bowler (3 for India as: Abdul Hafiz, 23 for Pakistan 1952-53 to 1957-58). Captained 23 Tests for Pakistan: Won 6, Lost 6, Drew 11. Home 9 Away 14. v England 4, v Australia 1, v West Indies 5, v New Zealand 3, v India 10. Won toss 10/23.

Tests	I	No	HO	Runs	Avg	100s	50s	Cl	Blks	Runs	Wkts	Avg	BB
Cpt.	23	37	3	93	847	24.91	5	15	272	94	2	6.42	3-35
Pr.	3	5	0	49	10	16.00	0	1					
Total	26	42	3	93	97	23.76	5	16	272	94	3	6.42	3-35

(the ICC was known so in those days). The first invitation came from India and Pakistan embarked upon their first tour abroad in the winter of 1952 under the leadership of Abdul Hafiz Kardar.

In those days Pakistan was trying to build its own cricket team. There were lots of talents around like the great Fazal Mahmud, selected to represent India against Don Bradman's team in Australia but could not make it due to the partition of India. Maqsood, Imtiaz Ahmad, Munawar

stayed back to study at the Oxford University. He received his degree and the blue and returned to his new country — Pakistan.

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