

Aussies abase Zimbabwe

Sports Reporter

Australia defeated Zimbabwe by 125 runs in the opening match of the four-nation Singer World Series limited overs cricket tournament at the Premadasa Stadium in Colombo, according to Star TV monitored here last night.

After stand-in captain-cum-wicketkeeper Ian Healy won the toss, the Australians piled up 263 for seven in their stipulated 50 overs of the day-night clash.

Man-of-the-match Steve Waugh top-scored with a fluent 70-ball 82. Besides half-centuries by opener Michael Slater and No 3 Ricky Ponting contributed to an imposing total on a docile pitch.

Set to score at more than five runs per over, the Africans never got going as they lost wickets at regular intervals. And eventually they were shot out for a paltry 138.

All Shah was the main run-getter with 41. Mr Sundries with 21 was the next highest contributor.

Debutant left-arm spinner Brad Hogg, a last-minute replacement for Shane Warne, grabbed a wicket.

The match is Healy's and Campbell's first as skippers.

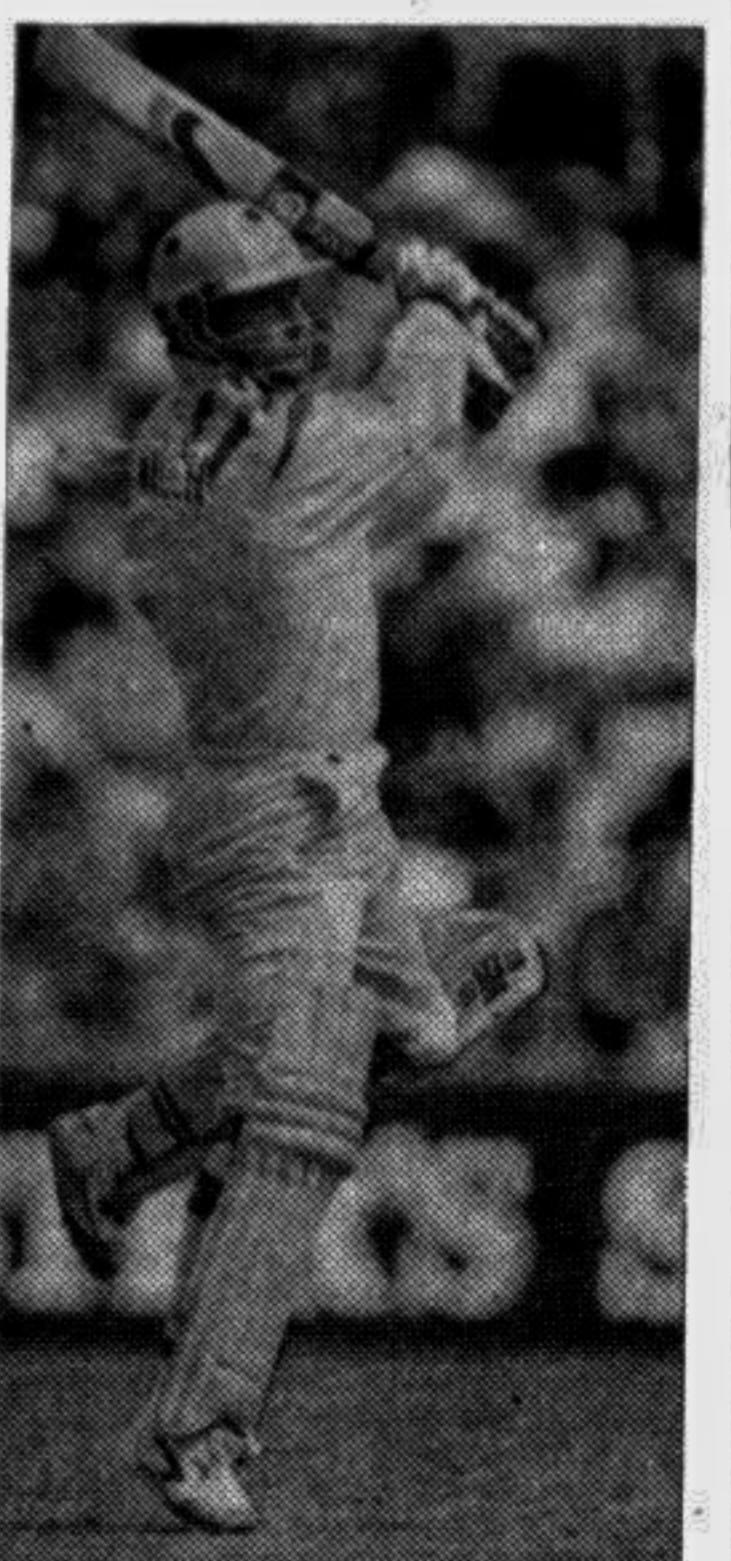
"I am not nervous, in fact I am looking forward to the match," said Campbell, who donned the skipper's cap after regular captain Andy Flower opted out to concentrate on his batting.

Healy, the fiercely competitive wicketkeeper from Queensland, was the last minute choice after Mark Taylor opted out because of injury.

"It is better than getting India or Sri Lanka first-up," Healy said earlier about Monday's match. "We can use the Zimbabwe match as an enthusiasm test, and to get our game going. They're like us — they'll be trying as hard as hell to win."

World cup champions Sri

Lanka and India are the other teams taking part in the tournament which runs till September 7.



S WAUGH... m-o-m

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the Singer World Series one-day cricket match between Australia and Zimbabwe on Monday:

AUSTRALIA:
M Slater c P Strang b Whittall 50
M Waugh b P Strang 18
R Ponting c and b Whittall 53
S Waugh c Campbell b Whittall 82
S Law b Streak 20

Result: Australia won by 125 runs.

Keegan lets Ginola go?

Sheffield Wednesday on Saturday.

The defeat left Newcastle with a miserable three points from three games and earned the players a bitter outburst from Keegan.

Newcastle have spent nearly 60 million pounds over the past two years in their attempt to build a championship winning side but their hopes this season were severely dented after a crushing 2-1 defeat at home to

"That's probably the worst performance in my reign as manager," moaned Keegan.

"Our performances so far this season have been poor and we will have to start soon if we want to win anything."

"At the moment everyone has got the right to say we look a poor side! The only way we can stop goals at the moment is to hard them up."

"You can't legislate for the two goals we've conceded — they were down to sloppy defending."

"In the end we were committing suicide out there and we could have got beaten by more," he added.

Newcastle chairman Sir John Hall, who has bankrolled the club's spending spree is reported to have had a crisis meeting with Keegan and his assistant Terry McDermott.

According to The Sunday Mirror, Hall told Keegan that he wanted trophies this season, not entertaining football.

French spikers' fourth

ASAHIKAWA, Japan, Aug 26: France completed a men's volleyball goodwill tour of Japan today by beating their hosts for the fourth straight time.

The French spikers straight-set winners over the national side Saturday, outgunned their struggling Japanese opponents 15-13, 15-4, 15-15, 15-7 at the Asahikawa Civic Gymnasium.

The Frenchmen had earlier defeated a Japanese student selection twice on Wednesday and Thursday before meeting the national side.

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Wayne clips Woody wings

down your good shots and hit a better one off it, that's where you feel the pressure."

Ferreira plans to take three weeks off after the Open to undergo arthroscopic surgery to repair a tear in the meniscus of his right knee. Recovery time is expected to be two weeks.

"He said he's been too busy to have the surgery."

"It's not hurting me at all," said Ferreira, who had an MRI after feeling some pain at the Olympics.

The title was the second of the year and 13th of his career for Ferreira, who also has won five doubles titles. It should also move him to No. 7 in the world rankings.

Ferreira reached the final with a 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 win Saturday over seventh-seeded Todd Martin.

Woodbridge, one half of the top-ranked Woodies doubles

team with Mark Woodforde, has won 42 doubles titles but only one (Coral Springs, Florida, 1995) as a singles player.

It was the first singles final of the year for Woodbridge, who earned 151,000 dollars.

Woodbridge came close to breaking Ferreira's service only once, in the third game of the match. But Ferreira saved five of the nine break points he faced during the tournament.

Newcastle's player-of-the-year George Weah missed a good first half opportunity but otherwise looked a little rusty while Italian teammate Roberto Baggio did not play due to injury.

New Dutch signing Edgar Davids came on late in the second half as a Milan substitute but made little impact.

The league season starts on September 8.

Ong Malaysian Open champ

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 26: Malaysia's Ong Ewe Hock overcame an erratic start on Sunday to clinch his first Grand Prix title in the men's singles at the Malaysian Open badminton championships, reports Reuter.

The 24-year-old Malaysian, seeded second in the 185,000 dollars tournament after a spate of late withdrawals, was given an early fight by Indonesia's Indra Wijaya who streaked to a 15-1 lead and then cruised to a 15-7 victory in the final game for his first singles title since turning professional two years ago.

"Although I was confident of winning, it did not come easily," Ong said. "Wijaya played a well-calculated game but he could not sustain the pace."

The unseeded Wijaya said he was happy just to get to the final and admitted he suffered from nerves.

"I was under tremendous pressure, but Ong deserves the credit. He controlled the match in the second and third games. But I am happy with my play here," said Wijaya who will compete in the Indonesian Open next week.

In the women's final, second seed Zhang Ning of China defeated top seeded compatriot Wang Chen 11-7, 11-8.

The women's doubles final saw the most entertaining badminton of the night with Danish pair Marline Thomsen and Lisbet Stuer-Lauridsen edging China's Qiang Hong and Lin Liu 10-15, 17-14, 17-16 in a 70-minute thriller. It was the Danish pair's first title on the Asian circuit since they became partners two years ago.

"This win is fantastic," Stuer-Lauridsen said. "We were trailing all the time but finally managed to pull through. I guess our experience mattered most today."

Batistuta's gift for Fiorentina

MILAN, Aug 26: Argentine striker Gabriel Batistuta gave Fiorentina the perfect 70th birthday present on Sunday with two goals that gave the Italian Cup winners a 2-1 Super Cup victory over Serie A champions AC Milan, reports Reuter.

The victory, coming on the eve of the founding of the Florence club in 1926, also marked the first time since the pre-season trophy between the cup winners and league champions was started in 1988 that the cup winners had won.

Batistuta gave Fiorentina the lead in the 11th minute. Sweden's Stefan Schwarz picked him out with a lob to the edge of the box and Batistuta did the rest, chipping veteran defender Franco Baresi and scoring at the near post.

Montenegrin midfielder Dejan Savicevic equalised for the home team, weaving past a defender, checking and firing in a left-footed shot in the 21st minute that gave young Fiorentina goalkeeper Francesco Toldo little chance.

The score stayed level to the final minutes but with a penalty shoot out looming, Batistuta took charge.

French international midfielder Marcelo Desailly fouled the Argentine, whose coach at Boca Juniors before he joined Fiorentina in 1991 was new Milan coach Oscar Tabarez, and Batistuta rammed home the free kick from 30 metres out.

The 83rd minute shot, curling over the defence and dipping in under the bar from the striker dubbed Batigol by adoring Fiorentina fans, was just reward for Fiorentina who looked a far more impressive team.

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New Dutch signing Edgar Davids came on late in the second half as a Milan substitute but made little impact.

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Libuda no more

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany, Aug 26: Reinhard "Stan" Libuda, whose stunning goal from 40 metres gave Borussia Dortmund the European Cup Winners' Cup over Liverpool in 1966, has died of a stroke. He was 52, reports AP.

Libuda also scored the winning goal in a 3-2 victory over Scotland that sent Germany to the 1970 World Cup in Mexico, where he played for the national team.

A right-winger who was one of the best dribblers Germany ever produced, Libuda earned the nickname "Stan" after England star Stanley Matthews.

He spent his career with Schalke 04 and Borussia Dortmund, and played 26 games for the national team.

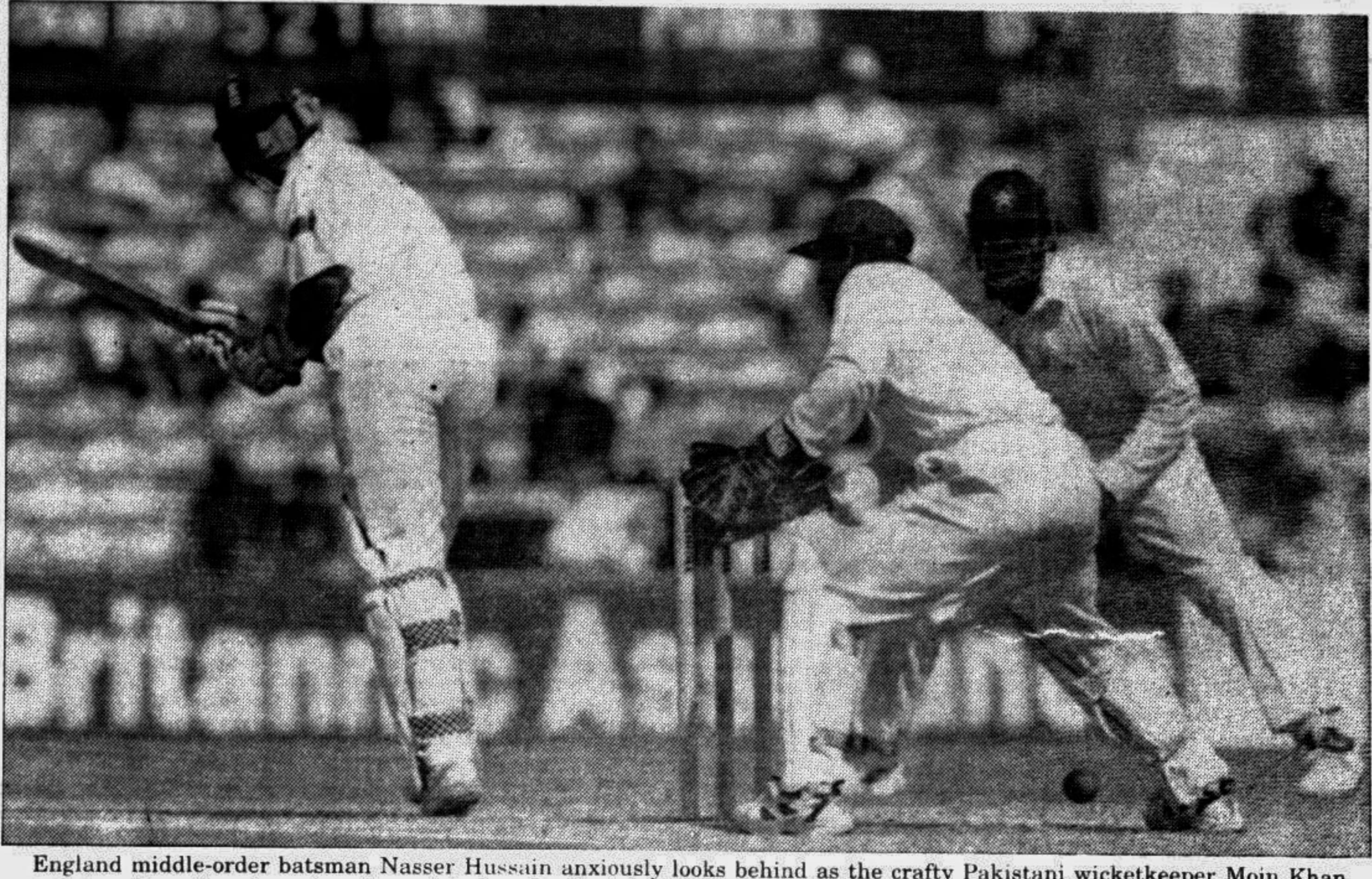
Libuda's most spectacular goal was the lob from some 40 metres in extra time that clinched Dortmund's 2-1 victory over Liverpool in the Cup Winners' Cup final in Glasgow 30 years ago. It was the first European title won by a German club.

Libuda, who had surgery for throat cancer and other health problems in recent years, died Sunday. He will be buried Thursday in Gelsenkirchen.

Ethiopia advance

ADDIS ABABA, Aug 26: Ethiopia advanced into the first round of the African Nations Cup on penalties after the teams drew 0-0 in their second leg, preliminary round match here on Sunday, reports AFP.

Ethiopia won the penalty



England middle-order batsman Nasser Hussain anxiously looks behind as the crafty Pakistani wicketkeeper Moin Khan makes a deceptive stumping attempt during the final day of the third and deciding Test at The Oval yesterday.

— AFP UNB photo

Pakistan win Test series 2-0

Mushie makes a miracle

PAKISTAN: First innings

52-8 declared (Saeed Anwar 176, Salmi Malik 100 not out, Ijaz Ahmed 61)

ENGLAND: Second innings

(overnight 74-0)

Atherton c Inzamam b Mushtaq 43

Stewart c Mujtaba b Mushtaq 54

Hussain lbw b Mushtaq 51

LONDON, Aug 26: South African fast bowler Shaun Pollock concluded his Warwickshire career with a flourish on Sunday by taking the final three wickets during the county's Sunday League victory over Worcestershire, reports Reuter.

Pollock, who returns home on Tuesday for an ankle operation, took the last three wickets in nine balls as Worcestershire were dismissed for 154.

And after lunch the collapse came in dramatic fashion.

Graham Thorpe was undone by Mushtaq's googly and caught at slip by Wasim; and a bold and defiant innings of 51 by Nasser Hussain was ended by the lbw verdict of Sri Lankan umpire BC Cooray.

Hussain padded up playing no stroke to a ball which pitched around leg stump, and it looked to be spinning enough to miss the off stump, but the Essex player had to go — leaving England on 178 for four.

Eight runs later, Nick Knight hit back a low full toss to Mushtaq for a bonus wicket.

Then when Crawley fell to Pakistan captain Wasim Akram it was all but over. Wasim took the final two wickets to join a select group who have taken 300 Test wickets.

England's total of 242 left Pakistan needing only 48 runs in almost two hours to win.

Although Saeed Anwar skied a lifting ball from Allan Mullally to be caught by Knight for one, Aamir Sohail (not out 15) and Ijaz Ahmed (not out 12) steered Pakistan to a brilliant win.

Earlier on Sunday, former captain Salim Malik effectively guaranteed Pakistan a series win over England when he hit a fine 100 not out on the fourth day.

It was his 14th Test century and his first since being sacked from the captaincy amid allegations of bribery and match-fixing in March last year.

Malik's innings allowed the Pakistanis to declare on 521 for eight in their first innings, a lead of 195 and ensured that England would spend the last day fighting for a face-saving draw rather than pushing for the win which would level the series 1-1.

His 14th Test century, which came in 287 minutes from 223 balls and included 10 fours, was also record fourth for a Pakistan batsman against England, only Javed Miandad, with 23, has scored more centuries overall.

It also demonstrated that Pakistan's batting line-up has few equals. Five different players have scored hundreds during the three-Test series and England have dismissed them only twice, for 240 and 448, in five attempts during the summer.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the last day of the third and final Test between England and Pakistan at The Oval on Monday:

ENGLAND: First innings 326 (J. Crawley 106, G. Thorpe 54, Wasim Younis 45); Second Test: Headingley — drawn.

Pakistan win series 2-0.

Romero floors Grey

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico, Aug 26: Junior bantamweight Danny Romero didn't have to land many punches Saturday, and he knew the last one would bring him a world title, reports AP.

Romero, a flamboyant, hard-puncher, thrilled the partisan crowd by knocking down two-time champion Harold Grey of Colombia, 12-2 into the second round.

Romero (28-1-0, 25 knockouts), thrilled the partisan crowd by knocking down Grey three times in the first round. He finished off the former champ with an overhand right that caught Grey on the chin and sent him to the canvas.

Grey (21-2-0, 15 knockouts) tried to get up but could only manage to roll over as referee Larry Chavez counted him out.

Romero, the former junior flyweight champion who vacated that title to move up to bantamweight, leaped into the arms of his father and trainer, Danny Romero Sr.

"The last punch I felt in my hand, I liked it," the new champion said. "I knew he wasn't getting up."