

Simba Cup final today

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 20: South Africa will field a youthful and inexperienced team against Ghana in Pretoria on Saturday as coach Clive Barker continues to experiment with his squad, reports Reuter.

The two countries meet in the final match of the Four Nations Simba Cup tournament with South Africa needing just a draw to win the week-long tournament.

Barker, whose team won their first two matches against Kenya and Australia, said on Thursday he would start with several of the fringe players who had not had an opportunity to play in the friendly international tournament so far.

Only a heavy defeat would deny South Africa the trophy, even if Australia beat Kenya handsomely in Saturday's other match.

Weah not for sale

MILAN, Sept 20: Italian league champions AC Milan have been busy in rejecting bids for foreign clubs for their Liberian striker George Weah, reports AP.

Adriano Galliani, managing director of the Italian soccer powerhouse, said Thursday that several English clubs were among the bidders in the last few weeks.

"Weah is not on sale, however. He has a contract with Milan through June 30, 1999. Until that date it's useless to try to get him," Galliani said.

"Weah the FIFA and African player of the year, scored some spectacular goals in the new Italian soccer season sparking fresh attention for his talent."

Galliani also said that English clubs will be seeking more players from Italy next year because the start of digital television in that country will make available much more money to English clubs.

"The gap between Italian and English soccer is going to widen," the AC Milan official added.

For the first time this year, several leading Italian players joined the English league on richer contracts.

Transfers included strikers Gianluca Vialli and Fabrizio Ravanelli, who left European champion Juventus of Turin to join Chelsea and Middlesbrough.

Rush left in the cold

CARDIFF, Sept 20: Welsh manager Bobby Gould has again omitted record goalscorer Ian Rush from the national squad for the World Cup qualifier against Holland on October 5, reports Reuter.

Gould has stuck with Dean Saunders and Mark Hughes as his first-choice strikers, and has also included Arsenal's John Hartson who skipped the under-21 side against San Marino.

"I'm bored of the Rush situation," said Gould. "It's been going on a year. I haven't even bothered to telephone him to tell him he's not in the squad this time because last time it just caused problems."

But I've seen him play twice for Leeds, he's been working very hard and I am sure he will come good again under George Graham.

"There's no way you can say at this stage he hasn't got an international future."

Gould, lacking the suspended Ryan Giggs, has also been irritated by the reluctance of clubs from below Premier League level to release their players for training and matches.

"They want to be successful, but so do I. I want to take this country to the World Cup in 1998. I feel like I'm banging my head against a brick wall."

SQUAD

Neville Southall, Andy Marriott, Mark Bowen, Steve Jenkins, Chris Coleman, Kit Symons, Andy Mervin, Marcus Browning, Mark Pembridge, Andy Legg, Barry Horne, John Robinson, Dean Saunders, Mark Hughes, Gary Speed, Rob Savage, Gareth Taylor, John Hartson, Jason Bowen, Deryn Brace, Wayne Phillips.

Nantes salvage a draw

AUXERRE, Sept 20: Struggling 1995 French champions Nantes gained a morale-boosting point against the 1996 champions Auxerre, drawing 2-2, twice coming from behind, reports AP.

A double strike from captain Japhet N'Doram gave Nantes only their third point in eight matches, which leaves them three from the bottom of the table.

His second came virtually on the stroke of halftime, as he dived to head home at the far post from a Claude Makelele cross that had evaded the Auxerre defence and keeper Lionel Charbonnier.

Leeds' door open for Brolin

LEEDS, England, Sept 20: George Graham, the new manager of English Premiership Leeds United, has said he was not writing off disappointing Swedish import Tomas Brolin, reports AP.

Graham said that Brolin, who is currently on loan to Swiss First Division club FC Zurich for another fortnight, could still have a future at Elland Road, providing his attitude was right.



Sri Lanka's Asanka Gurusinha tries to avoid a powerful cover drive by Ali Shah during the third day's play of the second and deciding cricket Test against Zimbabwe in Colombo yesterday.

SL poised to sweep series

COLOMBO, Sept 20: Zimbabwe, struggling to avoid another innings defeat in the two-match Test cricket series, were 47 runs behind Sri Lanka's first innings score, with only four wickets in hand at the end of the third day's play Friday, reports AP.

The tourists ended the day at 162 for six, with Ali Shah not out on 62, and Andrew Whittall on one. For Shah, playing his third Test, it was the first half-century, off a painstaking 253 balls in 279 minutes, peppered with five fours.

Sri Lanka declared at 350 for eight shortly before lunch, with Hashan Tilakaratne unbeaten on 126 — his highest Test score that included 13 knocks to the fence. Zimbabwe were shot out for 141 in their first innings.

Chasing a first inning deficit of 209 at the Sinhalese Sports Club grounds, Zimbabwe started badly, when Mark Dekker fell before wicket to left arm paceman Chaminda Vaas for four, with the score on nine.

Grant Flower succumbed for 13 in similar fashion to left-arm leg spinner Jayantha Silva with the score on 30, and skipper Alistair Campbell was caught at forward short leg by substitute Marvan Atapattu off the same bowler, four runs later.

Shah and former captain Andy Flower then put on 57 for the fourth wicket before burly Asanka Gurusinha took an ac-

robatic catch at square leg to dismiss Flower off Muttiah Muralitharan with the score on 91. Flower's 31 came off 95 balls, with four boundaries.

Craig Wishart next shared a 44-run partnership with Shah, before the former was unlucky enough to give a catch off his glove to wicketkeeper Romesh Kaluwitharana off spinner Sanath Jayasuriya. His 58-ball knock contained two boundaries.

Guy Whittall didn't last long, nicking the ball to Asanka Gurusinha with the score on 144, leaving Zimbabwe in dire straits.

Jayasuriya was the most successful of the Sri Lankan bowlers, taking two for 16 off seven overs. Silva took two wickets for 36 runs off 15 overs, while Vaas had one wicket for only eight runs off 15 overs.

Earlier, Tilakaratne and Ravindra Pushpakumara took the score to 340 from the overnight 317, before their 64-run eighth wicket stand was broken by Bryan Strang taking a simple catch from Pushpakumara off Paul Strang for 23.

For Zimbabwe, right arm leg-spinner Paul Strang took four for 66 off 38 overs, while his brother, left-arm medium-pacer Bryan, captured three for 63 off 20 overs.

Zimbabwe lost the first Test by an innings and 77 runs in side four days.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day

Bindra for new era

TORONTO, Canada, Sept 20: Indian cricket board chief Jyoti Binda said Thursday that fans should not be allowed to disrupt cricketing relations between India and Pakistan.

"The fanatics should not be allowed to dictate terms in deciding cricket tour exchanges between the two Asian nations," Binda told the Associated Press. He was in Toronto to witness India and Pakistan play in the five-match Sahara Cup one-day series which made Canada an international cricket outpost.

The last tour exchange between the two nations was in 1989 when an Indian team under Krishnamachari Srikkanth's captaincy toured Pakistan. Pakistan's return visit has been called off three times at the eleventh hour due to non-clearance by the government, expressing concern at the cricket's safety.

"Mature and sane elements should ensure that the microscopic minority of fanatics should not dictate terms to the large number of cricket lovers in the sub-continent," Binda said.

Leics keep on track

LONDON, Sept 20: Leicestershire tightened their grip on the English county championship on Thursday as their rivals endured a frustrating start to the final round of championship matches, reports Reuter.

Second-paced Surrey spent the entire day in the pavilion as rain washed out the first day of their match against Worcestershire and Kent were bowled out for a paltry 154 by Gloucestershire, virtually killing their mathematical title chances.

Leicester, in contrast, enjoyed a positive day's cricket against Middlesex, bowling out the visitors for 190 in 56.4 overs to claim maximum bowling points and then reaching 36 for one before bad light intervened.

David Millns, regarded as the fastest English bowler in the country behind Devon Mal-

During the past seven years, as tours between the two nations have been suspended, the India-Pakistan cricketing duels have continued to take place at neutral venues.

The cricket boards in the two nations get along well. Despite the suspensions of mutual cricket tours, they jointly hosted the World Cup along with Sri Lanka earlier this year. It was during the World Cup that the lone encounter between either of the two countries took place in the southern Indian city of Bangalore.

"It's time we reciprocal tours and showed maturity by treating cricket as a sport and the players as sportsmen," Binda said.

He said the two countries were going to complete 50 years of independence and were hosting separate tournaments to commemorate the occasion.

"I hope the governments in the two countries rise to the occasion and allow the cricket teams to travel across (the border) and play in these tournaments," Binda said.

The one-day tournament in India will be next May followed by the event in Pakistan during September 1997.

colm, began Middlesex's slide before England left-arm Alan Mullally took over.

Mullally dismissed Peter Wellings, Mike Gatting and Owais Shah in a three-over spell and finished with figures of four for 53, with only Mark Ramprakash's smooth 71 delaying the home side.

The former England batsman was finally halted when he offered a simple return catch to Gordon Parsons having hit two sixes and 10 fours off 127 deliveries.

Leicestershire, whose only previous title was claimed in 1975, now need only 214 more runs to secure sufficient bonus points to eliminate Kent from the title equation and leave Surrey as their only challengers.

Kent were undone by West Indian fast bowler Courtney Walsh who took four for 50, with only Trevor Ward able to rise to the occasion with a batting 86.

Four-nation cricket Kenyan squad named

NAIROBI, Sept 20: Spin bowler Maurice Odumbe was named today as captain of the Kenyan side in the four-nation tournament starting in Nairobi on September 28, reports AP.

It will put Kenya against world champions Sri Lanka, South Africa and Pakistan. Odumbe was the star of the Kenyan side which scored an upset defeat against West Indies in the World Cup, bowling out three batsmen for 15 runs in 10 overs and being named man-of-the-match.

Other members of the team: Asif Karim (deputy captain), Steve Tikolo, Tito Odumbe, Rajab Ali, Martin Suji, Tony Suji, Kennedy Otieno, Deepak Chudasama, Hitesh Modi, Sundip Gupta, Lameck Onyango, Joseph Angara.

Kenya meanwhile drew a three-day match Thursday at the Ruaraka Sports Club just outside Nairobi against a touring northern Transvaal side from South Africa.

At the start of the day, Kenya were 261 runs behind northern Transvaal's first innings total of 420 for eight declared. Kenya finished the day on 239 for seven.

Beware Windies!

SYDNEY, Sept 20: Former Australian captain Allan Border and the 1970-80's fearsome new ball attack of Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson will reunite to face the West Indians in their opening cricket tour match in November, reports AP.

The Australian Cricket Board Friday announced the legendary trio would play in the ACB Chairman's XI for the traditional tour opener at Lilac Hill in Perth on November 4.

Springing up the occasion will be the appearance in the invitational side of West Indian fast bowling great Michael "whispering death" Holding to face his countrymen in the limited-overs match, expected to draw 10,000 fans.

TEAMS: Tom Moody (captain), Damien Martyn, Justin Langer, Mark Hussey, Adam Gilchrist, Darren Lehmann, Allan Border, Brendon Julian, Dennis Lillee, Jeff Thomson, Michael Holding, Jo Angel (12th man).

Davis Cup Austria-Brazil play off

SAO PAULO, Brazil, Sept 20: Brazil's Davis Cup team and Austria on Friday meet in a playoff tournament which will decide which country will compete in the 1997 Cup, reports AP.

The draw to decide which players will face each other was held Thursday at Sao Paulo's Hotel Transamerica, where the tournament will be held.

Fernando Meligeni (119th in the ATP ranking) and Gustavo Kuerten (94th) will represent Brazil in the singles matches. The doubles team is made up of Roberto Jabali (165th) and Jaime Oncins (231th).

Austria went with World No. 3 Thomas Muster and Markus Hipfl for singles and Clemens Trimmel and Udo Pamberger scheduled for doubles.

Friday's singles matches will pit Meligeni against Muster, followed by Kuerten versus Hipfl.

Seles' Fed Cup aspirations



ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey, Sept 20: Monica Seles is seeing this week what homecourt advantage can do.

She likes what she sees. Seles, who anchors the United States team in next weekend's Federation Cup finals here, said Thursday she hopes fan support in the host country will translate to a victory over Spain, reports AP.

During a conference call from Tokyo, where she is playing in the Nichirei Ladies tournament, Seles said the Japanese players there have reaped the benefit of boisterous fans.

"I hope it will be the same feeling as when we came to Japan. The fans give so much support. It's really tough to play in a host country," she said.

Nichirei Open Pierce sent packing

TOKYO, Sept 20: World number one Monica Seles stayed in form to beat Naoko Sawamatsu Friday and set up a semi-final meeting against another Japanese, Kimiko Date, at the 450,000 dollar tournament here, reports AP.

The Yugoslav-American, who has been struggling with a shoulder injury throughout the season, showed no ill-effects in beating the Japanese number three 6-1, 6-4.

"I felt that I played my serve a lot better today than in the past, but the last time I played Naoko at the French Open, she was attacking my second serve, so I was trying to hit the second serve a little stronger," Seles said.

"I think I played an all around good game."

Third-seeded Date was 0-3 and 40-love down when she started an onslaught, including 16 straight points from love-40 in the fifth, to score a 6-3, 6-0 slashing of a shell-shocked Amanda Coetzer, the 1993 champion.

An array of lightning approach shots was the basis of her lopsided victory as Date, who has not beaten Coetzer in their previous two encounters, often hit a clean winner to leave the South African helpless.

"I know she is a tenacious player," Date said. "At the beginning, I tried to take the offensive, and she made the pace. So I changed my tactics when I went 0-3 down and tried to wait for a chance comes by. It worked."

As for the match against Seles, Date said: "I can't say I'm confident, because she is the number one player. Maybe I have a slight chance. I don't know if I can take it, but I'll do my best."

Earlier in the day, American Kimberly Po pulled off a stunning 7-5, 6-4 upset victory to stop French ace Mary Pierce's defence of the title.

Po, enjoying the best season of her career, with wins over Anke Huber of Germany, her compatriot Mary Joe Fernandez and Date in the last two months, used her accurate placement as the best weapon to beat the fourth-seeded Pierce.

"My game plan was to try to move her a little and try to make her hit one extra shot," said the American, who went one break down in both sets. But each time she came back, forcing Pierce to misfire her powerful strokes.

Seles, Lindsay Davenport, Mary Joe Fernandez and Linda Wild will play for the United States. Spain will be represented by Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario, Conchita Martinez, Virginia Ruano Pascual and Gala Leon Garcia.

The Fed Cup finals will be played Sept 28-29 in Convention Hall, the cavernous 67-year-old Boardwalk landmark that hosted the Miss America

court when I played against Martina," she said.

This time, the competition will be distinctly tougher.

Sanchez-Vicario and Conchita Martinez, the world's second- and third-ranked players, respectively, have led Spain to the Fed Cup title in four of the last five years.

Spain beat the United States in last year's final 3-2, and won 3-0 in the 1994 final.

"I think we have a chance to do well this year. It would be nice to do well, but whatever happens happens," Seles said. "I don't want to put pressure on anybody."

She enjoys playing with Davenport and Fernandez, she says. Asked if she would rather have Gigi Fernandez, the world's second-ranked doubles player, on the team, Seles declined comment.

Billie Jean King, captain of the U.S. team, left Gigi Fernandez off the roster after the two had a falling out during the Fed Cup semifinals in July.

But Seles still likes the team. "We make our practices fun," Seles said. "We help each other out a lot. It's a whole team effort, and I think that's what Fed Cup is all about. It's a team, not just an individual."

The left shoulder injury that has hampered her in Japan and, before that, in the US Open is no better and no worse, she said.

She has not decided whether to seek surgery to repair it, she said.

"I haven't had any time to go to the doctor and probably won't for the next few weeks," she said.

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