

Column One

Sports

WHIZZ KID

COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Sports WHIZZ KID competition-60

✓ Tick the Correct Answers

Competition closes : 8 pm Jan 3, '97

1 Who won the Danish Premier Division football league title this season?

Mohammed Alahan Multijuddha

2 Which team won the Bajoy Dibash Cup hockey title?

Usa Ajax Bangladesh Army

3 Which country won the Champions Trophy hockey title recently?

Pakistan Holland Germany

4 Who is the top scorer in this season's Premier Division football league?

Nakib Mian Aliaz

5 Former Italian national soccer coach Arrigo Sacchi now coaches

Inter Milan AC Milan Fiorentina

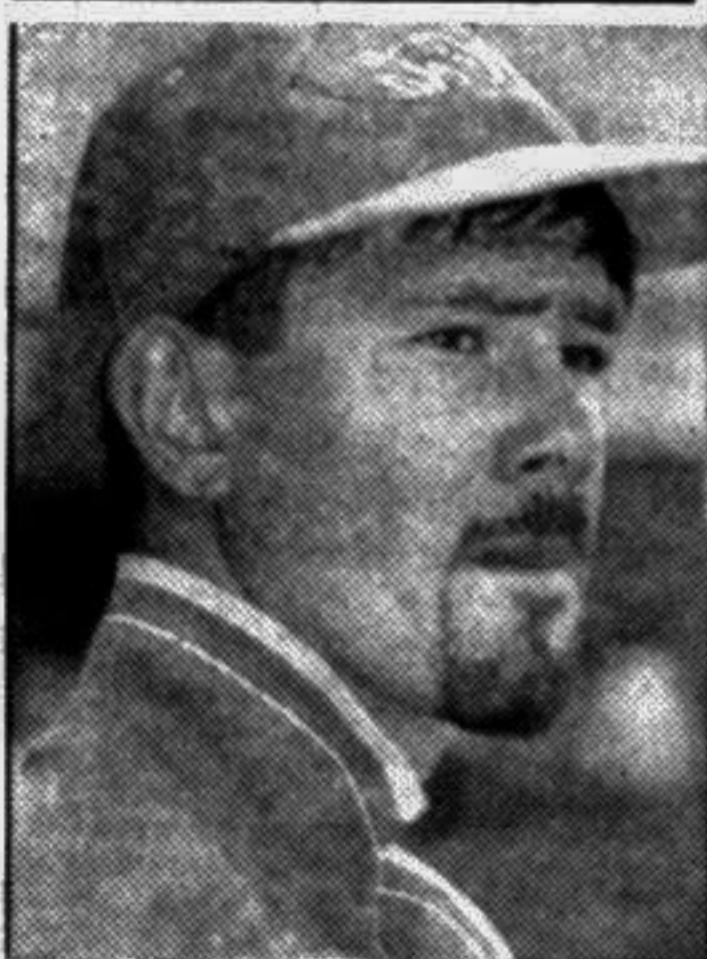
Name

Class Roll No.

School Address

Phone: (If any)

SPORTS TALK



Ricky Ponting

(Australian Test cricketer)
My elevation to the senior team wasn't very surprising for me and my family. In fact, we knew it was to come very soon as I was in top form. My mentors Greg Chappell and Rodney Marsh insisted that I should be tried.

About his inclusion in the national squad.

The ruling named after a European court case brought by Belgian footballer Jean-Marc Bosman, outlawed the practice whereby clubs demanded a transfer fee for a player — even if his contract had expired.

Scraping that practice instantly wiped a few hundred million dollars off the books of European clubs and threatened disaster in Italy.

An Italian club would sign a player on a four-year-contract, Brunelli explained. "But in their accounts the cost would be written off over six years — the assumption being that he would still be worth something on the transfer market after the contract had ended.

Suddenly that residual value wasn't there anymore. Although few clubs risked financial collapse, many found themselves with several billion lira less in their accounts at the end of the year."

Mercifully, the Italian government issued a decree allowing clubs to spread their Bosman losses over three years in return for tighter financial controls.

However, the economics of football had been changed for good.

"Before, a club president would focus on his playing squad, and try to sort out any financial problems on the transfer market. Now he has to concentrate on sponsorship, TV rights, merchandising and attracting people into the stadium."

Where Italian clubs have gone wrong, Brunelli argues, is failing to realise that they need a constant source of revenue — and one that relies as little as possible on the team's weekly results.

"In England or in the United States, the presidents of clubs who are quoted on the stock exchange do not say 'this year, we will win the championship,' they say 'This year, we'll make sure the public enjoy them-selves.'

"In Italy, we have yet to take up the idea drawing people to a football ground which is open 250 days a year and not just 80."

"Manchester United earn eight billion Lira (five million dollars) a year from restaurant facilities, conferences and other events at Old Trafford."

"And do know what the most visited museum in Barcelona is? Gaudí's? No, it's Barcelona FC's."

"In terms of marketing, Italy is still in pre-history. The merchandising of the entire Serie A put together is worth less than any top English club or Barcelona for Ajax, Amsterdam."

"And good intentions over merchandising from the clubs

is not enough. There also needs to be a crackdown on the counterfeiters."

The reason why the NBA is so successful in the United States is because people pay for exclusive merchandising rights — and there are police on the streets to make sure those rights are respected," he told the news agency.

Brunelli, who is working on a book "The Economics of Professional Italian Football Clubs," realises that much that is wrong cannot easily be put right.

Every football club in Britain has its own stadium and is free to build lucrative executive boxes, restaurants and conference rooms. Improved facilities and a police crackdown on hooliganism has meanwhile seen attendances soar.

In Italy the stadiums are owned by the local authorities and shared by teams. Ticket prices are high and attendances have fallen every year for the last four years.

Several key grounds — Milan's San Siro, Rome's Olympic Stadium and Turin's Delle Alpi — were meanwhile expanded to host the World Cup in 1990 and are now hugely expensive to run.

Delle Alpi alone costs five million dollars a year in maintenance.

The result, Brunelli says, is that we have to live with the legacy of stadiums of 70,000 or 80,000 capacity that nobody needs.

But it will be difficult to explain to people that we need better-equipped grounds for 40,000 people that are cheaper to run and are owned by the clubs."

The results of this phenomenon have been evident in the make-up of the Pakistan team today. The latest finding has been that of Muhammad Zahid, from the village of Guggu Mandi near Sahiwal, who single-handedly took Pakistan to victory in the second Test against New Zealand at Rawalpindi. His emergence shows the extent to which cricket is being played in these regions, and the fact that it is now definitely the sport of choice for thousands of youngsters everywhere.

The opening ceremony is to be staged in South Korea, and the final match and closing ceremony are to be held in Japan, but the host city for the final has yet to be named.

Yamashita said the major port city of Yokohama, 29 kilometers (18 miles) south of Tokyo, is constructing the largest stadium among the 10. Its capacity will be 70,000.

Saitama prefecture, Tokyo's neighbour on the north, is planning the second largest stadium, with a capacity of 63,000, he added.

Along with the Olympics, the World Cup, held every four years, is one of the world's biggest sporting events. The United States was host in 1994, when Brazil won, and France is to be host in 1998, when the field will be expanded from 24 countries to 32.

But recently, I have been noting that all this seems to have changed. More and more cricket is played all over the country including in the smaller towns. A drive through any part of the countryside reveals this, with, in the Punjab at least, cricket being played along roadsides everywhere. At Bhurban too, where I visited recently, one could find small boys equipped with bats and tape balls out on the roads, merrily racing down the slopes after the ball each time it rolled away.

The new chief executive of the cricket board, Majid Khan, is said to be keen to promote cricket at all levels. One of the best things he could do is set up a rural cricket development organisation of some kind, which can help those keen to promote the game establish grounds, organise training camps and so on.

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Recently, on the outskirts of Jhelum, I met a local landlord who is eager to encourage cricket in his native village. He has allowed local youngsters to make a pitch on a piece of land that he owns, and says that if he knew how to go about it, he would be willing to contribute towards the cost of arranging for a coach to come down for a month or so and guide the youngsters.

There are no doubt plenty of other people willing to make the same kind of effort. All that they need is some support and encouragement from the people running the affairs of our cricket. After all, given the growing rural-level interest in cricket, it seems unfair to deprive youngsters from these areas of an opportunity to develop their skills. Indeed they need to be given as much assistance as possible, in recognition of the fact that they are striving to carry on with their sport, even though they have no proper facilities or coaching.

Another think that is vital is some kind of talent-spotting scheme. Muhammad Zahid was lucky to be picked up by the PIA team. There are many others out there who fail to find such good fortune, and whose talents for his reason go waste.

Courtesy — The News, Pakistan.

A German triumph over adversity

A black and white photograph of Juergen Klinsmann holding the Euro '96 trophy.

A file photo shows German captain Juergen Klinsmann proudly holds up the Euro '96 trophy in January earlier this year when

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