

S Africa in trouble

Sports Reporter

Hosts South Africa were 102 for five after 20 overs in reply to a fighting Zimbabwean total of 256 in limited-overs triangular tournament match in Johannesburg yesterday, according to the Star TV monitor here late last night.

Earlier, the tourists piled up the massive total losing eight wickets in their stipulated 50 overs.

Kiwis well in command

WANGANUI, New Zealand, Jan 31: New Zealand A had a firm grip on their four-day cricket match against England at stumps on the second day at Victoria Park on Friday, reports AP.

In their second innings, the home side — effectively the New Zealand second team — were 187 for four, with Lorne Howell on 51 and Chris Harris on 31.

They held an overall lead of 261, and seem set to leave England a difficult task of winning the match on a pitch which is steadily wearing.

The only wickets to fall in the final session were left-hander Phil Chandler, who was caught at slip from off spinner Robert Croft for 31, and Matt Horne, who was leg before wicket to left-arm spinner Phil Tufnell for five.

Howell and Harris had added 86 for the fifth wicket in 106 minutes.

Earlier in the day, England had been bowled out just before lunch in their first innings for a dismal 107, trailing by 74 on the first innings.

New Zealand Test hopefuls Geoff Allott and Heath Davis picked up four wickets apiece as England's batsmen failed to cope with some lively, penetrative seam bowling.

BRIEF SCORES

New Zealand A: 181 and 187-4 (Chris Harris 51 not out, Craig Spearman 47; Andrew Cadick 1-22)

England: 107 (Ronnie Irana 40, Nasser Hussain 14; Heath Davis 4-22, Geoff Allott 4-44).

Bowe joins US Marine

NEW YORK, Jan 31: While Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield are planning a 50-million-dollar rematch, Riddick Bowe is headed for Marine "boot camp," reports AFP.

Former world heavyweight boxing champion Bowe said Thursday he will join the United States Marines and not fight again until the end of the year.

Bowe was enlisted in the US Marine Corps' reserves this week. He expects to report to Parris Island, South Carolina, on February 10 for eight weeks of boot camp, the first formal instruction period for new recruits.

"This is something I have wanted to do all my life," Bowe said. "Now, I am looking forward to becoming a Marine with the same determination and commitment that made me champion."

Thugwane assaulted

JOHANNESBURG, Jan 31: Olympic marathon gold medalist Josiah Thugwane was assaulted by a motorist Thursday, hours before he was due to receive a top sporting award at a ceremony here, his trainer said, reports AFP.

Thugwane was driving home from a training session in South Africa's Mpumalanga province when he narrowly missed hitting another car and became involved in an altercation with the driver, Ray Dibden told The Star newspaper in Johannesburg today.

The unidentified man pulled Thugwane from his car and punched him in the mouth.

Thugwane, a coal mine-worker who won the marathon at the Atlanta Games last July, was taken to hospital in Middelburg some 150 kilometres (93 miles) outside Johannesburg and treated for shock, bruises and cuts to the mouth, Dibden said.

Thugwane was later Thursday to have received the Victor Award for the most outstanding sporting achievement of 1996, sponsored by the state broadcaster, but he was forced to miss the awards ceremony because of the incident.

Shortly after returning from the Games last year, Thugwane was robbed of his car by gunmen near his home.

Maracana falls from grace?



RIO DE JANEIRO, Jan 31: The impending sale of Maracana Stadium has some of soccer's biggest names arguing over what should be done with the world's largest stadium, reports AP.

Pele, who scored his 1,000th goal in Maracana in 1969, called a consortium's plans for radical changes to the stadium "absurd" and "inadmissible".

IFPA President Joao Havelange said the only solution for the concrete dinosaur and its decrepit sports complex was to raze them and start over.

But no one argues that urgent repairs are needed if Maracana is again to become the showcase for Rio soccer — and, possibly, for the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.

Built for the 1950 World Cup in Brazil, Maracana was a fitting stage for Pele, Garrincha, Rivelino and other stars of soccer's "Golden Age," when Brazil won World Championships in 1958, 1962 and 1970.

Although Maracana's official capacity was 155,000, more

and Pope John Paul II said mass there on a 1980 visit to Brazil.

The huge arena, five minutes from downtown Rio, became the centre of a sports complex, including an athletics track, a swimming center and a gymnasium dubbed "Maracanazinho," or Little Maracana.

But the crowds began to dwindle, driven away by a combination of high ticket prices, increasing violence and an overload of games. Teams found that ticket revenues didn't cover the cost of lighting, security and other expenses and moved their games to smaller stadiums.

The Rio de Janeiro state government, which owns Maracana, neglected its maintenance and engineers condemned sections of the stadium, which were closed to fans.

Last year, the state announced it would privatise the stadium.

The lone candidate for the concession, a consortium of five companies, this week revealed its plans for refurbishing the complex when it takes

adjoining Maracana to make a parking lot for 1,400 cars.

"They plan to reform, to privatise, fine. But to demolish and destroy I think is a mistake," said Pele, now Brazil's Minister of Sports. "The idea of putting an athletics track in the field is really absurd. It's inadmissible."

Ademar Ferreira da Silva, who won two Olympic gold medals in the triple jump in 1952 and 1956, appealed to planners to reconsider.

"Rio athletes have only one track, and that's Celio de Barros," he said. "To eliminate this track to make a parking lot — it just doesn't make sense."

Some athletes said that Rio could hurt its chances of being chosen as site of the 2004 Olympics.

"For a country that wants to host the Olympics, destroying a athletics stadium looks bad," said Jacqueline "Jackie" Silva, a beach volleyball gold medalist at the Atlanta Games.

But others thought the plan didn't far enough.

"If the Maracana complex



This Star file photo shows the magnificent Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

than 183,000 tickets were sold for a 1970 World Cup qualifying game against Paraguay. But no one knew exactly how many fans could fit into the unmarked grandstand, seats and the field-level, standing-room-only "general" sector.

A crowd of nearly 200,000 crammed into Maracana for the 1950 World Cup final between Uruguay and Brazil.

Frank Sinatra reportedly gasped when he walked on to the stage before a full house in Maracana. Ex-beatle Paul McCartney played to his biggest audience ever at the stadium.

over Maracana. The remodeling probably would start in July and take 30 months to complete.

The centrepiece of the new Maracana complex is a shopping centre with boutiques, restaurants and movie theatres.

The soccer field would be reduced to 100-by-70 metres from 110-by-75, the capacity limited to 96,000 and the moat-like "general" sector filled into build an athletics track around the field.

But the most controversial project called for razing the Célio de Barros athletics stadium

were imploded, there still would be six years to rebuild it according to the requirements of international sports entities," Havelange said in an interview Thursday with the Rio daily O Globo.

Havelange, who is Brazilian, said Maracana simply is too big. The stadiums to be used in the 1998 World Cup in France hold 40,000 to 80,000 people, he said.

In 1950, Maracana, with capacity for 200,000 people, had its value, he said. "Today, because of television, it's a mis-

take."

Second-seeded Thomas Enqvist of Sweden reached the last eight by defeating Moroccan Karim Alami 6-3, 6-0.

Milan in the doldrums



ROME, Jan 31 (AP): For the first time in years, AC Milan are merely mediocre, and it's hard to pinpoint the season's low point.

Maybe it was elimination from the Champions' League. Or from the Italian Cup. Or the 3-2 league loss to Piacenza that cost former coach Oscar Washington Tabarez his job.

Or George Weah's headbutting incident that led to a six-game suspension from European play. Or the left ankle injury that's sidelined the Liberian for six weeks.

Veteran sweeper Franco Baresi is brittle and Alessandro Costacurta is inconsistent. Disgruntled Christian Panucci, a rising star at right back, was shipped to Real Madrid even though there was no proven successor in sight.

On Sunday, the troubled backfield unit will have to contend with the most potent one-two attack punch the league has seen in years: Sampdoria's veteran Roberto Mancini and rookie Vincenzo Montella. Their 24 combined goals are just one fewer than the entire Milan squad has tallied.

They're the main reason Sampdoria have taken the biggest standings leap with respect to one year ago. Conversely, Milan has declined the most. After 18 matches last season, Milan were in first place and Samp were tied for 12th.

Samp have lost just once in their last 12 games, 1-0 to Juve last month.

Milan will be without midfielder Stefano Eranio (suspended), who'll likely be re-

placed by Montenegrin Dejan Savicevic on the right wing. More importantly, Saccì is hoping to be able to send Weah onto the field for the first time since he twisted his ankle in a 1-0 loss to AC Parma Dec. 22.

Goalkeeper Fabrizio Ferron, out two weeks with a leg injury, should be back between the posts for Sampdoria.

Juventus, meanwhile, should have an easier time against 16th-place Cagliari.

The Sardinians will try a five-man defence with former Italian international Lorenzo Minotti at sweeper, and Juve will counter with an attack pairing Alessandro Piero, who was suspended last round, with streaking Michele Padovano.

Padovano, a veteran journeyman who's shown a knack for big goals in big games, has been given the chance to prove he can score consistently while Croat striker Alen Bokšić is hurt. Padovano has five goals in his last three outings and often offered an assist last round.

Frenchman Didier Deschamps, whose specialty is midfield containment, should return from a leg muscle injury for Juve.

Third-place Vicenza play at 11th-place AS Roma. Vicenza's 30 goals are second only to Sampdoria's 37 and Roma will field a revamped defence to counter Uruguayan Marcelo Otero and company. Russia's Omari Tetradze and France's Vincent Candela are expected to play their first matches with Roma.

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