

Column One

SPORTS TALK



Pete Sampras (World No 1 tennis player) The balls don't seem like they are going through the air that well. They seem real mushy.

Sports WHIZZ KID COMPETITION FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN WIN TK, 2000/- PRIZE BOND EVERY FORTNIGHT

Sports WHIZZ KID competition-63 Tick the Correct Answers Competition closes : 8 pm Feb 14, '97

Table with 5 questions about tennis and cricket, and a grid for answers.

Name, Class, Roll No., School Address, Phone: (If any)

Bridge Notes By An Expert

The hands from Bermuda... Board No: 49 Dealer North: Love All... Open Room: West Soloden, North Munir, East Lavin, South Fazli... Closed Room: Masood, Meckstroth, Pass, Zia, Rodwell

All pass. The Americans bought the contact in both rooms... Masood started his fourth best spade and the 9 forced the king... Soloden's 10 ran to the king and Soloden led a spade immediately, dummy's king winning.

Englishmen tighten grip

WELLINGTON, Feb 7: England led by 80 runs with seven first innings wickets standing to put them to command at the end of the second day of the second Test against New Zealand at the Basin Reserve today, report agencies.

Led by a fired-up Darren Gough, England scuttled New Zealand for 124 in the morning and then batted steadily on a tricky but flattening wicket to reach 204 for three wickets.

The wicket offered little lift and movement for the seamers and slow turn for the spinners but England had solid contributions from in-form batsman Alec Stewart, captain Mike Atherton, Nasser Hussain and Graham Thorpe.

Hussain who reached his half-century in 140 minutes was not out on 60 and Thorpe was on 47 in an unbroken stand of 88.

Hussain mixed aggression with caution. He smashed Dipak Patel for a six and four in the off-spinner's first over, but then retreated into his shell for long periods allowing debutant teenage left arm Daniel Vettori to dominate him.

Stewart made a cultured 52 and looked on his way to his third Test century in as many Tests when he was brilliantly caught by a diving Stephen Fleming at first slip off left-arm Geoff Allott for 52.

After losing Nick Knight with the score on 10 before lunch, Stewart and Atherton set purposefully about overhauling New Zealand's modest score.

The pair put on 70 in just over ten minutes and despite the bowlers still being able to extract considerable movement and lift, were able to drive with freedom at times.

Atherton looked well set on 30, having just imperiously off-driven Simon Doull to the boundary when the seam bowler had him trapped leg before playing forward.

Stewart, who scored 101 not out in the second Test against Zimbabwe and 173 in the drawn first Test in Auckland, reached his 50 in 76 balls and hit six boundaries.

Both the young left-armers, Allott with his quicks and Vettori with his slows, troubled the batsmen but with scant reward. In the morning New Zealand, resuming at 56 for six, offered some resistance through Nathan Astle (36) and Patel (45), but Gough, Andrew Caddick and Dominic Cork completed the rout.

The aggressive Gough ended with five for 40 off 16 overs, his second five-wicket Test bag. New Zealand-raised Caddick, in a return to Test cricket, did the Kiwis no favours, finishing with four for 45.

Gough was told to "calm down" by umpire Steve Bucknor after an exchange of words with tailender Allott.

After the second delivery, Bucknor walked from square leg to talk to captain Atherton and the message was clear. "He said calm down and he made no more of it," Gough said.

But the lively 26-year-old Gough made no apologies for his approach on the field. "He's (Allott) a fast bowler, he's come back into the side and I was just being aggressive as you are in cricket," Gough said. "Everybody does it. It's part of the game."

Asked if he would expect some short-pitched bowling if he bats in England's first innings on Saturday, Gough replied: "I'm sure I will. It wouldn't surprise me."

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard on the second day of the second England-New Zealand cricket Test on Friday.

Table with columns: O, M, R, W for various players like B Young, S Stewart, B Pocock, etc.

Yet to bat: J Crawley, D Cork, R Croft, D Gough, A Caddick, P Tufnell

Table with columns: O, M, R, W for players like Doull, Allott, Vettori, etc.

News agents in England are loaded with magazines on all sorts of sports except cricket. Considering it is the headquarters of the ruling body of world cricket, it is not a happy reflection.

Well, Bob's music might not have made the expected grades but he is always popping up with brilliant ideas.

It looks like there are further steps afoot to make soccer, football as we know it, more attractive. The English manager Glenn Hoddle has come up with a proposal, this time restricting the goalkeeper from moving out of the 18-yard box.

Although he may not be in the starting line-up, the English are all ready worked up over Italian striker Gianfranco Zola, particularly because playing for Chelsea last week his team overturned a 0-2 half-time deficit against Liverpool to ultimately win 4-2.

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Earlier in the day, reports from Scotland suggested that Gascoigne's injured ankle had forced his withdrawal.

"He is still a doubt for the game, sure, because he's only just come out of plaster and we need to assess that over the coming days," said Hoddle.

Edberg on new mission STOCKHOLM, Feb 7: Sweden's former world number one Stefan Edberg, who retired in November, will make a comeback at the Stockholm Open in the autumn, as an official, reports AFP.

WC qualifiers Footballers shortlisted

Sports Reporter Twenty-five footballers have been chosen for the second phase trials to select the national squad which will take part in the World Cup qualifiers beginning in March.

The selection has been made out of 34 footballers who joined the first phase of the camp began at the Mirpur Stadium late last month under the supervision of German coach Otto Pfister.

The selected twenty-five are: Goalkeepers: Mohammad Pomir (Mohammedan SC), Biplob Bhattacharya (Abahani) and Aminul Haque (Farashganj SC)

Defenders: Monem Munna, Hasan-al-Mamun, Sohail Reza (Abahani), Jewel Rana, Monwar Hossain Munna and Ruhul Amin (Mohammedan SC), Masood Rana (Muktijoddha), Pradeep Kumar Poddar, Mohammad Faisal (Arambagh KS) and Sohail-Masum (YMC Fakirerpool).

Forwards: Rakib Hossain, Mamun Hossain Joarder, Mizanur Rahman (Abahani), Alfaz (Mohammedan SC), Maksudul Amin Rana (YMC Fakirerpool), Imtiaz Ahmed Nakib (Muktijoddha) and Sourav Majumder Raju (East End Club).

Bangladesh will face Malaysia, Chinese Taipei and Saudi Arabia in their World Cup zonal qualifying round divided into two phases. The first phase will be held in Malaysia from March 16 to 20 while the second round is billed from March 27 to 31 in Saudi Arabia.

The team along with seven officials will fly to Malaysia on March 12.

Div I cricket Boys ride on Sumon Sports Reporter

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ACB refixes fixtures

SYDNEY, Feb 7: A reshuffle in Test cricket dates has left Adelaide without its traditional Australia Day date for the staging of next summer's Tests against South Africa, reports AFP.

Adelaide's loss is Sydney's gain, with Australia's biggest city retrieving its lucrative new year's fixture when it hosts the second Test against the touring South Africans.

The Australian Cricket Board's draft 1997-98 international season programme, revealed Thursday, schedules the second Test against South Africa in Sydney on January 2, while Adelaide will lose its January 26 National Day start with the third Test beginning on January 30.

The ACB's decision has upset sections of the cricket community with even cricket-loving Prime Minister John Howard buying into the argument describing in Parliament Adelaide's traditional Australia Day scheduling as sacrosanct.

The one-day triangular series finals are scheduled to be played over the Australia Day long weekend in Melbourne and Sydney on January 23, 25 and 27, the ACB said Thursday.

Acting ACB chief executive Richard Watson said the Test dates were essential to fit in with South Africa's travel plans, a three-Test series against New Zealand and commitment to the commercially lucrative one-day series.

After a series in Pakistan, South Africa arrive in Australia on November 23 - nearly two weeks later than normal - and requested three first class matches prior to the first Test in Melbourne on Boxing Day.

So between their arrival and December 26 we have to fit in three first class matches as well as the first portion of the one day series," Watson said.

"We must finish off the one-day series in January. That determined the Test match in Adelaide must move back a week."

He said it would not have been possible to swap the one-day finals and the Adelaide Test because that would have meant splitting the last qualifying matches and the final.

Melbourne has retained its Boxing Day Test in the programme which Watson said would be officially confirmed by February 23.

The New Zealand Tests will be played in Brisbane from November 7-11, Perth from November 20-24 and Hobart from November 27-December 1.

Sydney will be returning to its traditional new year date which for the past two seasons has hosted Tests in late November early December.

Watson said the 1998-99 season's five Test series against England should see all the traditional Test dates restored.

No disciplinary action was taken by Perth Test match referee Raman Subba Row, of England.

Lloyd, one of the West Indies' greatest captains, made it clear he did not find Taylor's comments appropriate.

Taylor is a guy I respect, but I was not happy with his attitude.

"We had a young player there trying his best. His place was in jeopardy and he was fighting against the odds and did extremely well."

Lloyd said the West Indies were considering pursuing the matter with the International Cricket Council - the sport's supreme body.

No disciplinary action was taken by Perth Test match referee Raman Subba Row, of England.

But Adams' ankle will prevent him training, possibly until Monday at the earliest while Robert Lee, the recalled Newcastle midfielder, is looking doubtful with groin trouble.

As a precaution, Hoddle has called up Redknapp for the first time since he suffered serious injury during Euro '96, explaining, "I'm not sure if we're going to have to send any players back so I wanted him in there with us now."

Vicenza beat Bologna VICENZA, Italy, Feb 7: Vicenza, in a battle between the two surprise sides of the Serie A season, hung on to beat Bologna 1-0 in the first leg of their Italian Cup semifinal on Thursday.

Striker Roberto Murgita headed in the lone goal from a free kick by midfielder Massimo Bughetto seconds before the interval.

Bologna had the best chances prior to that. With striker Carlo Nervo hitting the post in the eighth minute and Russian international Igor Kolyvanov forcing an acrobatic save from goalkeeper Francesco Antonioli in the 36th.

Neither side had the upper hand in the second half. Although Bologna coach Renzo Ulivieri was visibly upset when the referee failed to award a penalty kick in the 85th minute after the ball hit Murgita's hand in the area.

The referee gestured that contact had been accidental.

The second leg will be played on February 27 with the ultimate winner facing either Internazionale or Napoli, who drew 1-1 in their first leg in Milan last week.

Vicenza and Bologna, whose first leg match was rescheduled after fog forced its cancellation last week, are separated by just a point in the league table.

Bologna are alone in third place on 31 points, five behind leaders Juventus.

The winner of the Italian Cup gains a place in next year's European Cup Winners' Cup - an almost unthinkable dream for two teams who started the season with avoiding relegation their main goal.

Lloyd on sledging

PERTH, Australia, Feb 7: The West Indies may go to the International Cricket Council over sledging by Australian players, manager Clive Lloyd revealed here Thursday as he criticised the attitude of Australian captain Mark Taylor, reports AFP.

"I am quite dissatisfied with what the captain (Taylor) said on this issue," Lloyd said before his side left here Thursday after a controversial fifth and final Test, which the Windies won by 10 wickets although they lost the series 2-3.

During the Test, champion West Indies batsman Brian Lara told how Australian players had sledged, or verbally abused young opening batsman Robert Samuels during his long and patient first innings of 76.

Taylor admitted afterwards some well-chosen words had been aimed at Samuels during his innings which played a major role in the visitors' three-day victory at the WACA ground.

"I think he handled it very well and he'll be a better player for it," Taylor said.

The Australian skipper also chose the occasion to criticise Lara's on-field demeanour, calling the gifted little left-hander an "antagonist."

"I don't think he (Samuels) needed Brian Lara to back him up in the press," Taylor said.

Hoddle's anxious hours

LONDON, Feb 7: The injury problems facing England coach Glenn Hoddle mounted on Thursday ahead of next week's crucial World Cup clash with Italy, but he insisted key midfielder Paul Gascoigne could still be fit, reports AFP.

But despite his optimism over Rangers star Gascoigne, the England coach has called up Liverpool midfielder Jamie Redknapp.

Striker Alan Shearer, who was confirmed as captain for the Wembley showdown ahead of Euro '96 skipper Tony Adams - is the latest doubt with a bad back.

Adams, goalkeeper David Seaman and midfielders Paul Ince and Robert Lee are also under treatment with little more than five days before the Group Two clash.

"It really is frustrating. I have waited three months for this game and then you end up with this scenario," sighed Hoddle.

"I have got six players, we've probably got to allow two or three days for their injuries to settle."

"You have all these things in your mind - training schedules when you want to work on team pattern, when you want a functional day - and all that has now gone out of the window."

"I wanted to do a lot of important work on Friday and Saturday but I won't be able to now."

In reply to a suggestion that Hoddle was merely trying to tactically wrong-foot his Italian counterpart Cesare Maldini, Hoddle said: "I wish I was. No, the injuries really are concerning us. Anyway we don't do things like that."

Earlier in the day, reports from Scotland suggested that Gascoigne's injured ankle had forced his withdrawal.

"He is still a doubt for the game, sure, because he's only just come out of plaster and we need to assess that over the coming days," said Hoddle.

"But Walter Smith (Rangers manager) has given him his blessing and sent him down."

"I had a good 20 minute chat with him this morning and he was fine - in many ways excellent."

Edberg on new mission

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword grid with clues for Across and Down.

ACROSS 40 Chartres range chum 1 Colorless 19 Clumsy oaf 42 Wahine's 2 Buckeyes' home 5 Party 45 Nuts 3 Start over 24 Calendar abbr. 8 Uris' 49 Never 4 Airfield 25 Overseas construction worker agrees 18' 50 See 24 5 Loss of a 26 Creations 12 First president of Korea 52 Empire stripe 28 Singer Davis 13 Mound 6 Nest egg 29 Sermonized 14 Pianist 7 Get one's second 30 Farm female 15 Verdi opera fill wind 16 Supply 54 Top a torte 8 Auto- 55 Author 9 Biography 31 Daniel's place 17 As if newly-made 56 Oxidation one 36 Least believable 18 Yogi's 57 WJM news-10 Kitchen flooring, for short 37 Bird on Australia's coat of arms 20 Pretentious, plus 58 Appointment 11 Saxophone 38 Satanic 22 Additional phone, in brief 59 TALK COW SCAR ARBA PIE POLO CORNWALL AREAS KIRKLAND GINSING 42 Othello, e.g. 32 "Miss Brooks" 43 A's cousin 44 Troop group 45 Caffeine-rich nut 47 "sugar" 48 Curved molding expert

CRYPTOQUIP KDU SRSF ZLRK HURAAF TLUGWK HUACGD SUCWZ KHURKUT ACBUR BCT. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I'D GLADLY LIKE TO THINK OF FAST-TALKING PEDANTS SIMPLY AS FACTS MACHINES.

Today's Cryptoquip clue: 5 equals B The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.



A 7-year-old Ohio kid measures his arms' length against NBA player Hakeem Olajuwon at the all-star jam session at Cleveland convention centre on Feb 6.