



The members of Bangladesh cricket team seen waiting at the Dhaka Stadium before proceeding to BKSP for their residential camp yesterday afternoon. — Star photo

India 168 against Zimbabwe

BULAWAYO, Feb 15: Zimbabwe kept India's runs down and were well placed to beat them on Saturday in the first of two one-day internationals, reports AP.

India are on the way home after a gruelling tour of South Africa and their jaded condition showed as home team bowlers pegged them to a score of 168 all out in 43.5 overs.

The damage was mainly inflicted by strike bowler Heath Streak, who destroyed the middle and lower order and posted figures of five wickets for 32.

The root of the visitors' problem in a match reduced to 44 overs a side because of a late start after heavy overnight rain was the failure of skipper Sachin Tendulkar and Mohammed Azharuddin to get among the runs.

The two only managed 13 and 24 respectively. On the brink of disaster at 95 for six, a gritty stand of 63 by Rabinendra Singh and Anil Kumble gave them a measure of respectability.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the first one-day international between Zimbabwe and India at Queens Sports Club on Saturday.

INDIA
V Rathore c Campbell b Whittall 34
S Tendulkar c G Flower b Brandes 13
S Ganguly run out 2
M Azharuddin c A Flower b Brandes 24
b Brandes 24
A Jadeja c A Flower b Streak 4
R Singh c A Flower b Streak 4
N Mongia c Waller b Evans 4
A Kumble c Campbell b Streak 21
S Joshi lbw b Streak 0
D Ganesh c and b Streak 1
V Prasad not out 1
Extras: (b-6, lb-2, w-11, nb-2) 21
Total: (all out 43.5 overs) 168

Fall of wickets: 1-23; 2-33; 3-68; 4-72; 5-84; 6-95; 7-159; 8-159; 9-168.

Bowling
Brandes 8 1 34 2
Rennie 9 2 38 0
Streak 8.5 0 32 5
Whittall 8 0 29 1
Evans 8 1 20 1
Strang 2 0 7 0

(Incomplete)

USOC not amused

PHILADELPHIA, Feb 15: International Olympic Committee unhappiness with Atlanta's staging of the 1996 Games has US officials doubting they should bother making a bid for the 2008 Olympics, reports AFP.

The US Olympic Committee meets here this weekend after deflating the hopes of more than 40 cities that attended an informational session.

USOC officials said China, South Africa and South America are favoured to be voted hosts of the 2008 and 2012 Games. Africa and South America have never hosted the Games. Sydney beat out a Beijing bid for the 2000 Games.

Cities would have to spend as much as 10 million dollars just to be nominated as a US candidate, then spend up to 30 million dollars more for a presentation to the IOC.

An eye-opener for US contenders was the revelation that the IOC will require future host cities to sign agreements ensuring local taxpayers will cover any revenue shortfalls.

That would mean obtaining approval from voters, a complicated political process assured of putting any bid at risk.

USOC president William Hybl does not expect a decision this weekend, but should know by May whether or not the United States will field a candidate for 2008 or wait until 2012.

A US site, Salt Lake City, already has the rights for the 2002 Winter Olympics, so any future bid for those Games will be even further into the 21st century.

Most of the US candidates were sent off to seek lesser events, such as the 2007 Pan American Games. San Antonio and Miami, two US markets with large Hispanic populations, are front-runners to host the Panams, which were last in the United States in 1987 at Indianapolis.

The USOC plans to spend eight million dollars to help finance Olympic sports in danger

Kiwis assume control



CHRISTCHURCH, Feb 15: New Zealand were on top at stumps on the second day of the third cricket Test against England at Lancaster Park today, reports Reuters.

The tourists were 145 for five at stumps, still trailing the home side by 201 runs with three days to play.

Captain Mike Atherton had spent 204 minutes at the crease to be 66 not out, while Dominic Cork was on 16, after 75 minutes.

The pair had stopped a mid-order tumble with an unbroken 41-run stand.

The Kiwis, 346 in their first innings, need to win the Test to level the three-match rubber.

Lively left-armers Geoff Allott picked up three wickets as the English batsmen played a series of loose strokes, finishing the day with three for 49.

New Zealand's innings today, resuming at 229 for five, revolved around recalled wicketkeeper Adam Parore and all-rounder Chris Cairns, who added 82 in 103 minutes for the sixth wicket.

Parore reached 59 while Cairns made 57, his second half-century in five innings during the series.

Tallenders Daniel Vettori and Heath Davis added a breezy 27 in 33 minutes for the ninth wicket before off spinner Robert Croft finished the innings by taking his fifth wicket.

He finished with five for 95 off 39.1 overs, his best Test figures.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the third and final cricket Test between New Zealand and England at Lancaster Park on Saturday.

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 229 for five wickets)

B. Young b Cork 11
B. Pocock c Atherton b Croft 22
M. Horne c Thorpe b Gough 42
S. Fleming st Stewart b Croft 62
N. Astle c Hussain b Croft 15
A. Parore c Hussain b Croft 59
C. Cairns c Stewart b Caddick 57
S. Doull run out 1
D. Vettori run out 25
H. Davis c Hussain b Croft 8
G. Allott not out 8
Extras: (b-1, lb-16, nb-19) 36
Total: 346

Fall of wickets: 1-14; 2-78; 3-106; 4-137; 5-201; 6-283; 7-288; 8-310; 9-337.

Bowling:
Cork 20 3 78 1
Caddick 32 8 64 1
Gough 21 3 70 1
Croft 39.1 5 95 5
Tufnell 16 6 22 0
Thorpe 1 0 0 0

ENGLAND: First innings
N. Knight c Fleming b Allott 14
M. Atherton not out 66
A. Stewart c (Harris) b Allott 15
V. Hussain c Parore b Cairns 12
G. Thorpe b Astle 18
J. Crawley c Parore b Allott 1
D. Cork not out 16
Extras: (lb-3) 3
Total: (for five wickets) 145

Fall of wickets: 1-20; 2-40; 3-70; 4-103; 5-104.

Bowling:
Allott 12 3 49 3
Doull 10 0 27 0
Davis 12 0 36 0
Vettori 4 1 7 0
Cairns 8 5 12 1
Astle 3 0 11 1

ATHERTON ... 66 n.o

Biggies join the choir



ATLANTA, Feb 15: Reebok, Nike and several other sporting goods giants announced a campaign Friday to stop the exploitation of Pakistani children who stitch together soccer balls for mere pennies a day, reports AP.

A top executive, however, cautioned that the project won't be truly effective until organizations that govern the sport outlaw all balls produced by children under the age of 14.

"Unless everyone is playing with a ball that's free of child labour, this thing is a farce," Reebok chairman Paul Fireman said.

The World Federation of the Sports Goods Industry and the American-based Sporting Goods Manufacturing Association pledged that major ball-makers will buy soccer balls produced in Pakistan only if they were not made by children.

This project will be phased in over 18 months and independent monitors will issue public reports on whether companies are complying.

The initiative also includes the International Labour Organisation, the Soccer Industry

Council of America, Pakistani manufacturers and such major brand names as Adidas, Brine, Franklin, Lotto, Mitre, Puma and Umbro.

"We know American consumers want soccer balls on their shelves that ... were not manufactured with child labour," SGMA president John Riddle said.

Seventy-five per cent of the world's one billion dollars soccer ball industry is centred in the villages around Sialkot, Pakistan. Child welfare organizations estimate that 7,000 to 10,000 Pakistani children under 14 stitch balls in homes and small shops, receiving little pay for working up to 10 hours a day.

The programme, announced at the annual "Super Show" sporting goods trade convention, also aims to provide educational services to youngsters who are thrown out of work.

"We want to address the underlying social conditions that cause child labour," Riddle said.

David Husselbee, director of Save the Children's Pakistan office, said that the soccer-ball industry is only a small part of the child labour issue worldwide, and is hardly one of the

most dangerous lines of work. But, since most of the balls are stitched together in one area, this is an easier situation to tackle.

"Child labour is a colossal problem in Pakistan, and this is a good way to get involved," Husselbee said. "We want to make sure that all homes and workshops that make soccer balls are registered, so we can ensure that children are not doing the work."

North American and European soccer enthusiasts have been concerned since 1995 over reports that soccer balls were made by children. Last year, the US government began a campaign to discourage Americans from buying child-made balls, and FIFA, the international governing body for soccer, said it would not endorse soccer balls made by children.

Fireman challenged FIFA to go a step further and sanction for competition only those balls manufactured by companies in the programme.

"They're asking a lot of the manufacturers who make the balls," Fireman said. "There's a lot of complications when it comes to replacing labour and so forth, but that's fine. We're willing to do it."

But for them, there really no problem. All they have to do is certify their balls were not made by children.

FIFA spokesman Keith Cooper said Fireman was simplifying the problem facing the world's most popular sport. Also, Cooper said, the vast majority of soccer balls are produced by companies that belong to the programme.

"You have to be realistic," he said. "To have 100 per cent total assurance that a ball is not being made by child labour is logistically impossible. We can't possibly control every last ball manufacturer."

In Washington, a congressman who has been active in child labour issues praised the agreement but called on manufacturers to go one step further and print a "No Child Labour" logo right on the balls.

"There is one more simple step that companies should take to complete the effort," said Rep George Miller, Democrat of California. "If consumers can know that the ball is made of genuine leather, made in Pakistan, or made by hand, they should also be able to know that it was made without child labour."

Reebok has launched its own programme to ensure that none of its sporting goods products are made by children and print such a label on its products.

SAARC cricket Pakistan A arrive today

Sports Reporter

A 16-member Pakistan A cricket team led by Test discard Asif Mujtaba, one of the four participating nations of the forthcoming third SAARC cricket tournament billed to start at the Dhaka Stadium next Wednesday, are expected to arrive in the capital this morning.

According to sources at BCB, the organiser of the quadrangular meet, the Biman flight carrying the star-studded team will touch down at 8:15 am at the Zia International Airport.

The visitors during their week-long stay will be lodged at the Sheraton Hotel along with the other three participants — India A, Sri Lanka A and Bangladesh.

The powerful Pakistani outfit packed with half a dozen star players will take on the home side in the inaugural match on February 19. Following are the members of the Pakistan A team: Asif Mujtaba (captain), Aaqib Javed (vice-captain), Azam Khan, Akhtar Sarfaraz, Muhammad Kabir, Arshad Khan, Azhar Mahmood Sagar, Basit Ali, Mujahid Jamshed, Muhammad Wasim, Muhammad Hussain, Muhammad Zahid (coach) and Zaheer Abbas (manager).

Sri Lanka will arrive in the city tomorrow followed by India who are due the next day respectively.

Meanwhile, the Board has nominated Al Baraka Bank as its agent for selling tickets of the tournament from tomorrow. The tickets, only the daily ones this year unlike the previous years will be available in the following branches of the bank: Principal Office (Moti-Jheel), Dilkusha branch, Imam-ganj branch, VIP Road branch, Mirpur Road branch, Kwaran Bazar branch, Nawabpur Road branch, Narayanganj branch and Gulshan branch.

A blow for England?

LONDON, Germany, Feb 15: England had agreed with Germany at least three years ago to stand aside when bids were made for the 2006 World Cup, it was reported here today, reports AFP.

The Daily Mail says the English Football Association obtained German backing to stage the 1996 European Championship finals, which it says were certain to go to Germany, if the English allowed Germany a free run as the sole European candidate for the World Cup.

The claim punches a hole through the English argument that Germany and the European football union (UEFA) came to a shady deal to exclude England's bid for the 2006 tournament.

UEFA have since agreed to allow both England and Germany to present their rival bids to host the 2006 World Cup in Geneva on April 17.

UEFA will decide on the same day which one gets their official backing as they are keen for there to be only one European candidate.

They feel a double European bid would split their vote and let in a strong candidate from Africa or South America.

However, it has been hinted by English football chiefs that England would make a bid even if UEFA chose Germany as their Official candidate.

The row between the two football authorities has also brought the two political heads of state into the ballgame.

Ilie joins Mexican club

LONDON, Feb 15: Ilie Dumitrescu has completed his transfer from West Ham to Mexican club America, the Premiership club confirmed on Thursday, reports AFP.

The one million pound transfer (about 1.6 million dollars) comes after Hammers boss Harry Redknapp finally accepted that his gamble on signing the Romanian star backfired.

They stylish midfielder started just seven games for the East London club following a troubled 1.5 million pound move from City rivals Tottenham last year.

Heryanto's sweet revenge



NEW DELHI, Feb 15: World badminton champion Heryanto Arbi avenged his loss to Poul-Erik Hoyer-Larsen in the Olympic semifinals with a stunning power display in the Indian Open today, reports AFP.

Arbi showed no signs of the calf injury which kept him out of the circuit since the Atlanta Games by racing to a 15-4, 12-15, 15-2 win over the error-prone Olympic champion.

Arbi's opponent in Sunday's final of the 125,000-dollar event will be Indian national champion Gopi Chand, who defeated Kim Hyong-Jeon of South Korea 15-8, 15-9 in the other semifinal.

Indonesia stayed in line for a double when top-seed Cindana Hartono set up the women's singles final against Lee Soon Deuk of South Korea.

Cindana toyed with Korean Choi Ma Rae 11-6, 11-4 while Lee Soon upset second seed Joanne Muggeridge of England 11-3, 11-8.

What was expected to be the tournament's showpiece turned into an anti-climax as Arbi took advantage to Hoyer-Larsen's erratic play to smash his way to an easy win.

Arbi shut out the first game in nine minutes, and even though Hoyer-Larsen fought back to make it 1-1, the Indonesian needed only a further 11 minutes to take the third game and the match.

"I made too many mistakes," said Hoyer-Larsen, who admitted before the tournament he was short of motivation after winning the Olympic gold medal.

"You can't expect to win play-

ing so badly, but then one has to give credit to Arbi who made me commit errors. He was simply superb today."

"I don't seem to control the game anymore. There's a lot of hard work to do before I peak again," said Hoyer-Larsen, who defends his All-England title next month.

Arbi, who won the last World Championships in 1995, said he was nearing top form again after the six-month break.

Earlier on Friday Poul-Erik and Arbi brushed aside unfancied opponents to set up an intriguing semifinal clash in the tournament.

Larsen gave Malaysian youngster Choon Hang Wong a lesson in on-court manners during a 15-9, 15-13 victory that showed the 31-year-old Dane's comeback trail was on the right track.

Indonesian Arbi, also trying to hit peak form after a three-month break from the circuit because of a calf injury, dropped just nine points in a 15-3, 15-6 rout of Hong Kong's Chuen Kai Tai.

The other semifinal on Saturday will be contested by Indian national champion Gopi Chand and Kim Heung Jeon of South Korea.

Gopi Chand kept the host nation's interest alive in the tournament by coming from behind to defeat Korean Jang Chen Wong 8-15, 15-3, 15-4. Kim ousted Jason Wong of Malaysia 18-17, 15-10.

HERYANTO ARBI

"There was too much pressure on me at the Olympics because you had to win for your country," he said.

"I fumbled against Hoyer-Larsen at Atlanta, but I always had the game to beat him. Today I attacked and it worked, because he was making all the mistakes."

Although Arbi is expected to roll over Gopi Chand in the final, the Indian — ranked 190 in the world to the Indonesian's 25 — was not worried.

"He's just another Indonesian," laughed Chand, who stunned Arbi's teammate Dwi Aryanto in the first round.

"No one expected me to get so far, so I have nothing to lose. I'll just go out there and do my best," said Chand, who has not played Arbi before.

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FPU boss bucks up booters

PARIS, Feb 15: French Players' Union (FPU) chief Philippe Piat called for a change in apprentice contracts after Real Madrid announced on Thursday Monaco's 19-year-old Thierry Henry had agreed to join them next season, reports AFP.

Big guys add weight to push for national rugby

Nigeria is a populous country, with awesome sporting talent, in a continent where rugby is rare. Now, reports Gemini News Service, seeds have been planted that may one day grow into a national team to rival the mighty South Africans.

By John Perlman from London

I T had been snowing in the morning. Rain bucketed down in the afternoon, and even though the winter deluge had diminished to a drizzle by 7:30 pm, a chill wind whipped the wet into your face.

But none of that dampened the enthusiasm of the group of rugby players squelching

a great boost for the club, not that we're contributing directly to it. It is an encouragement for a lot of the young people back in school and moving up through the ranks."

The long-term ideal, though, would be to see players of that ability forming the core of a Nigerian national team.

the rugby field and hopefully I can do that. So there will be no divided loyalties — especially on the field."

Looking to the future, he believes players such as himself can help get the game going in Nigeria. "But for it to be exciting and to develop, you have to add the local population."



Rugby player Adedayo Adebayo: Opportunity to show talent

around beneath underpowered yellow floodlights. They do not get to train as often as they would like, and it would take more than a clod, muddy training pitch to scupper this session.

Hendon, a suburb of the British capital, is a world away from West Africa. But the players and organisers of the London Nigerians rugby club, believe that what they are doing — in the long term at least — has as much to do with Lagos as it does with London.

The club was formed six years ago from a core of Nigerian-born players who had learnt the game in England but found themselves wanting to "do things a little bit differently," says chief executive Tunde Aiyegbusi. They weren't too keen on the current set-up in rugby clubs in England at the time and they wanted to create something with a unique Nigerian atmosphere that they could play within.

Like most of the club's players, Aiyegbusi, who has been playing rugby for 17 years, was first introduced to the sport when he was sent to school in England. He says: "We wanted to play with a bit more enthusiasm — run the ball a bit more, rather than relying on the typical northern hemisphere approach at the time of just kicking the ball and playing behind a really big pack."

That approach has brought considerable success on the pitch. Every season except one has seen London Nigerians win their league and secure promotion to a higher level. And over the years, there has been the added satisfaction of seeing several Nigerian-born players go on to play for England.

Club chairman Dr Chuku Osanile says the achievements of players such as forwards Victor Obogu and Steve Ojomon, and winger Chris Oti, have been

"This (playing for England) was an opportunity for them to go as far as they could go in the sport," says Osanile. "With the absence of a Nigerian national side, we wouldn't expect them to do any differently. But ultimately, we are rather hopeful that the country will be able to put up its own team, with its own identity, and be able to excel on the international scene."

Rugby Union has been expanding steadily in recent years after being concentrated for many decades in Britain, New Zealand, France, South Africa and Australia. Then in 1987, a rugby World Cup was launched, and with each successive tournament, the profile and profits of the competition have soared. While Ivory Coast took part in the 1995 World Cup, and South Africa are the current World Champions, for the most part, rugby has been slow to catch on in Africa.

But what of Nigeria, the continent's most populous country and a nation that has repeatedly confirmed an awesome sporting potential on the soccer field and athletics track?

Aiyegbusi believes Nigerians "are uniquely qualified to play a game like rugby. That belief was reinforced recently when another Nigerian, winger Adedayo Adebayo, made his debut for England against Italy. Born in Ibadan, outside Lagos, he was sent to boarding school in Britain, learnt rugby, represented England at schoolboy level, and went on to play for the national first XV."

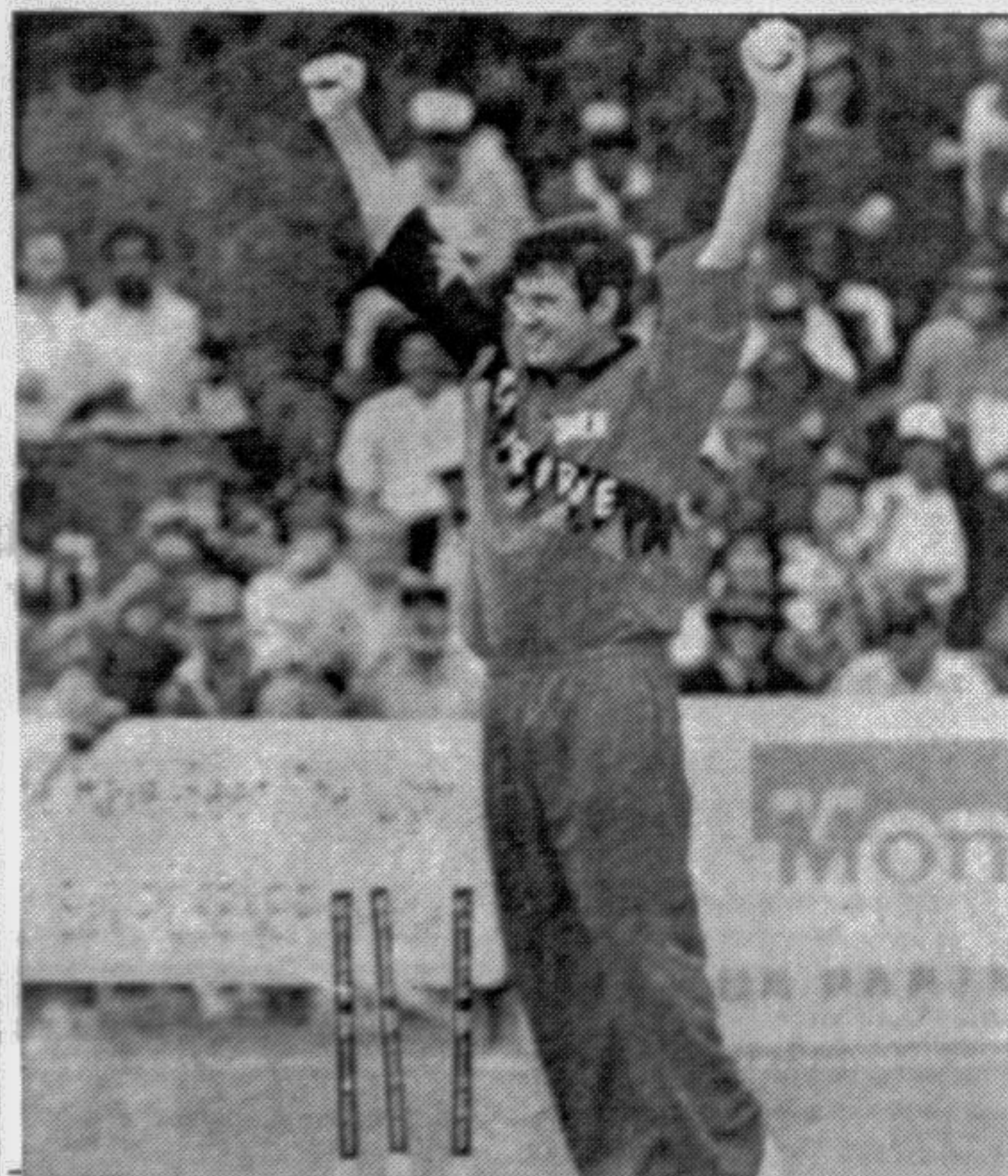
Efforts are already being made to build the game there, says Aiyegbusi. "People who have played for this club have gone back to Nigeria and have got involved in playing there. The next step, he believes, would be to set up a league, and then focus efforts on setting up a rugby football union that could arrange international fixtures, and access some of the vast World Cup profits that are supposed to encourage the grassroots game. "It doesn't take too much to promote rugby," Aiyegbusi says. "You don't need sophisticated equipment. Balls will do."

Even so, some outside help is going to be essential. Anyone in South African rugby with an ounce of shrewdness would surely see the long-term value of another African rugby power emerging, especially one with players able to match most opponents for size, strength and speed.

"If you get a big Nigerian," says London Nigerians' large captain Ediri Sideso, "you can bet your bottom dollar he'll be able to run as well as put his body about and show his physical strength. And that's very important — that's the way rugby is going... These guys have got to be able to run with the ball."

Rivalry between Nigeria and South Africa on the soccer field is fierce. It is likely to be a while before a Nigerian rugby team can challenge South Africa's best, but such a contest would give the game in Africa — and globally — a massive boost. On a muddy field in north-west London, the seeds are already growing. — Gemini News

About the Author: John Perlman is a South African freelance journalist based in London. He was a reporter on the Weekly Mail, Johannesburg, and later chief reporter of the Sunday Star.



Zimbabwe medium-pacer John Rennie exults after running out Saurav Ganguly during a one-day international against India in Bulawayo yesterday. — Reuters/UNB photo