

UAE Trophy from Nov 6

SHARJAH, United Arab Emirates, Aug 24 (Reuters/Internet): India will take on Sri Lanka in the opening match of the three-nation Champions Trophy cricket tournament to be played from November 6 to 13.

It was earlier scheduled from November 7 to 15. Zimbabwe is the third team in the tournament, in which all seven matches will be day-night.

"We have changed the dates slightly after studying the schedule of the ICC knock-out tournament which will be played in Dhaka from October 24 to 31," a spokesman for the organisers said.

The three teams will play each other twice in a league format before the top two sides clash in the final on November 13.

SCHEDULE
November 6: India v Sri Lanka
November 7: Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe
November 8: India v Zimbabwe
November 9: India v Sri Lanka
November 10: Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe
November 11: India v Zimbabwe
November 12: Rest day
November 13: Final

SL vs Hampshire Second day rained off

SOUTHAMPTON, England, Aug 24: Sri Lanka lost the chance to gain some vital practice ahead of their Test against England later this week when the second day of their match with county side Hampshire was washed out on Sunday, reports AFP.

The tourists face Alec Stewart's England side in a one-off Test at The Oval from Thursday but they will go into it short of match practice.

Sri Lanka manager Ranjit Fernando said: "It is a great pity because we were looking at this match to get in some valuable batting and bowling practice."

The Test match is only a few days away, and it would have been handy to have an extended bat.

"On the first day our bowlers got a good work-out against Hampshire, and we were looking for the same for the batsmen."

Hampshire made 447 for eight on the first day of their three-day match, with opening batsman Ashley Giles making a career-best 156.

Nat'l bridge postponed

National Bridge Championship scheduled to begin on August 28 has been postponed in view of the worsening flood situation, says a press release.

Bangladesh Bridge Federation will announce the fresh date and venue of the championship after the situation improves.

Meanwhile, Bridge Federation officials have undertaken relief operations in the flood-affected areas of Munshiganj district.

Lens lance Sochaux

PARIS, Aug 24: Pascal Nouma scored twice as title-holders RC Lens beat newly promoted Sochaux 4-0 away in the French First Division on Sunday to secure their first win of the season, reports Reuters.

Lens climbed to seventh, five points behind leaders Olympique Marseille and Girondins Bordeaux after three matches.

Marseille went top on goal difference on Saturday after a remarkable Houdini act. They were 4-0 down at home to Montpellier at halftime but fought back to win 5-4, securing victory with an injury-time penalty by captain Laurent Blanc.

Lens, whose only previous point had come from a 1-1 draw at home to promoted Lorient last weekend, scored all their goals in a 16-minute spell in the second half.

Czech winger Vladimir Smicer opened the scoring in the 54th minute when he ghosted in behind the defence to meet a low cross from the left by Nouma and shoot home from a tight angle at the far post.

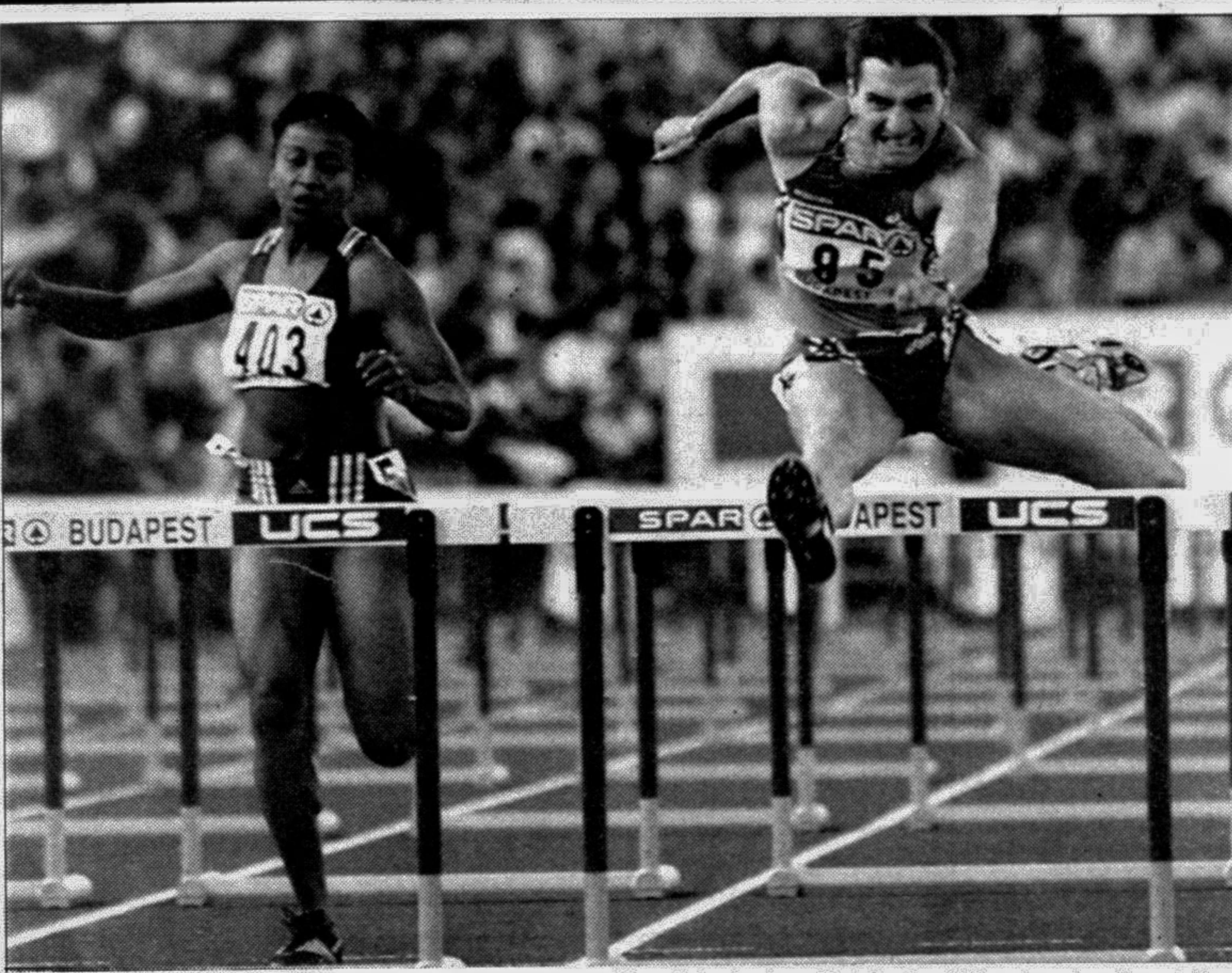
New France international striker Tony Vairelles lobbed the second three minutes later over former Paris St Germain goalkeeper Vincent Fernandez for his second goal of the season.

Nouma then struck twice in six minutes, his second in the 70th minute a header from a cross by Vairelles.

The result took the number of goals Lens have scored against Sochaux this year to eight.

When the two sides met in last season's League Cup quarter-finals the then Second Division team led 1-0 at halftime only for Lens to come back and win 4-1.

Earlier on Sunday, Nancy, another newly promoted side, snatched a 1-0 home victory over Nantes when striker Samuel Wiat scored in the fifth minute of injury time.



Bulgaria's Svetla Dimitrova (R) in action during her gold medal winning effort in the 110 metres hurdles at the European Athletics Championships on August 23. —AFP photo

Britain best in Europe

BUDAPEST, Aug 24: The European Championship ended with a British triumph and a disheartened loss for Wilson Kipketer.

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Not start training until late May. He won his comeback race in Monaco, but then lost in Zurich less than a week before these Europeans opened.

Kipketer led the pack until the final bend. After some jostling for position, Schumann attacked, going past Kipketer to win in 1:44.89.

It wasn't entirely clean, but it wasn't enough for the judges to overturn the result.

Schumann said he had been bumped slightly from the outside by another runner and leaned slightly onto Kipketer's arm.

"It wasn't on purpose and it was unfortunate, but it wasn't that bad," Schumann said.

Kipketer seemed to lose his stride slightly and gave up trying to catch the German. He slowed down and ended eighth and last.

"He has not been so strong in the finish this season and even in the heats he did not look strong," Schumann said. "At his best, Wilson would have continued running and he would have probably won."

Kipketer said he obviously came to the championship short on preparation, but insisted the bump from Schumann cost him the gold.

"Someone pushed me from behind and I stopped running because the race was stolen from me," said Kipketer, who almost a year to the day (Aug 24, 1997) smashed Sebastian Coe's record, lowering it to 1:41.11.

"I didn't have good preparation but there wouldn't have been a problem on the way home if somebody didn't touch me," Kipketer said.

Other winners on the final day included triple jumper Jonathan Edwards of Britain, the world record holder, who soared 17.99 meters for the second longest jump of the year, just behind his 18.01.

Another Briton, Steve Backley, also smashed the championship record with a 89.72-meter throw in the javelin, his third straight European gold.

Sonia O'Sullivan of Ireland clinched her second gold medal when she won the 5,000 to add to her 10,000 gold.

Grit Breuer of Germany, a sprinter with a drug-tainted past, led Germany to the women's 4x400 title to add to her 400-metre individual gold.

The only major record in the championship came in the women's 100 on Wednesday when Christine Arron of France, who also finished with two golds, set a European mark of 10.73 seconds to establish herself as the third-fastest woman in history.

There were some notable personal achievements.

Heike Drechsler of Germany won her fourth straight long jump title, only the third athlete to do so.

Colin Jackson of Britain, the world record-holder (12.91), clinched his third straight in the 110-meter hurdles and set a championship record of 13.02.

The next Europeans are in 2002 in Munich, Germany. The World Championships are next year in Seville, Spain, followed by the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

Spectre of failure haunts PSV, Metz

LONDON, Aug 24 (Reuters/Internet): PSV Eindhoven and Metz could become the first major casualties of the European Cup on Wednesday.

Although second qualifying round losers are guaranteed UEFA Cup action, a place in the lucrative 16-team Champions League is the first priority.

While Manchester United, Inter Milan, Benfica and Bayern Munich all hold comfortable cushions entering the second leg, the Dutch and French representatives trail lightweight opponents.

Metz appear to be in big trouble, 1-0 down to HJK Helsinki after the away leg. On paper the French side look more than capable of turning the tie around but they have not scored in their four matches so far this season.

The French league runners-up are still weakened by injuries with striker Bruno Rodriguez ruled out. Yugoslav Vladan Lukic, Metz's only other senior striker qualified to play in Europe, hurt his thigh in training on Sunday but should play.

Metz slumped 3-0 to Bastia in the French league at the weekend and playmaker Frederic Meyrieu said: "We probably had our minds on Helsinki. I think in a way we've hit the bottom -- now we can only go up."

Dutch runners-up PSV crashed 2-1 to tiny Lithuanian side Kedarna in the away leg. They too are struck by injuries

and looked equally unimpressive in domestic action, drawing 1-1 at newly-promoted Cambuur Leeuwarden.

Athletic Bilbao are bidding to overturn a 2-1 deficit against Dinamo Tbilisi and will be boosted by the return of Spanish internationals Julien Guerrero and Joseba Etxeberria.

Both players came through last week's friendly victory over Roma unscathed, leaving defender Roberto Rios as the only injury doubt for the Basque side.

The defeat in Tbilisi left Athletic needing a single goal to qualify -- but striker Santiago Ezquerro warned the fans not to expect all-out attack from the start.

Bayern Munich hold a comfortable 4-0 lead heading to Yugoslavia's Obilje Belgrade.

They were impressive at the weekend, beating MSV Duisburg 3-1, although coach Ottmar Hitzfeld is still without midfielder Mehmet Scholl and Ghanaian defender Samuel Kuffour, both injured.

Benfica, six goals ahead after the first round, look a certainty at Betar Jerusalem even though English striker Brian Deane injured his thigh in the Portuguese championship opener against Estrela Amadora.

Scottish coach Graeme Souness is expected to line up Nuno Gomes as a replacement.

Inter Milan carry a 4-0 advantage to Latvia's Skonto Riga while English premier league runners-up Manchester United lead LKS Lodz 2-0.

Blatter's warning

GENEVA, Aug 24: Sepp Blatter, president of the world soccer governing body FIFA, said top European clubs planning to launch a breakaway Super League were intent on hijacking the game and warned they could put the World Cup in jeopardy, reports AFP.

"Several major clubs want to take hold of the riches of the game," he said in an interview with the Swiss daily Info Dimanche.

He said the plans would undermine the game and could destroy the way the game was currently run.

"The threat of destabilising the whole game is real," he said.

Several major European clubs have admitted they have been approached about a new Super League, transcending European boundaries and involving only elite clubs who would earn massive television revenues.

Growing concern over the project led to European governing body UEFA recently meeting the company behind the plans, Milan-based media partners.

Blatter added: "Today, if people want to ignore the rules and go their own way it's difficult to stop them."

But, calling on UEFA to act, he warned a league run by a new body could cause a conflict of interests which could see top players not playing in the World Cup and thus devaluing the tournament.

The German and French football federations have already said they oppose a breakaway league, which is likely to eat away at UEFA's control of the game in Europe.

Nat'l schools hockey Armanitola in top form

Armanitola High School brightened the chances of winning their group at the national schools hockey tournament after winning both their matches at the BKSP ground in Savar yesterday, reports UNB.

Armanitola will meet Comilla Yousuf Multilateral School in their last group league match today.

In the day's action, Armanitola High School beat Manikganj Zilla School by 3-1 goals in the morning and then thrashed Orient Textile Mills School 11-0 in the afternoon.

In another match, Comilla Yousuf Multilateral School beat Orient Textile Mills School 2-0 at the same venue.

Solskjaer stays at Man United

MANCHESTER, England, Aug 24 (Reuters/Internet): Manchester United striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer no longer wants to move to London.

The Norwegian looked set to travel south after United accepted an estimated \$5.5 million pounds (\$9.01 million) bid from Tottenham Hotspur.

He had been pushed down the pecking order at Old Trafford following last week's club record purchase of Dwight Yorke for 12.6 million pounds (\$20.65 million).

But manager Alex Ferguson said Solskjaer has rejected the chance of regular first team football at Tottenham and elected to stay and battle for a place in United's starting lineup.

Ferguson was quoted as saying by the Manchester Evening News on Monday: "The boy doesn't want to go and I am happy with that. I don't want him to leave either."

Solskjaer is believed to have changed his mind because he wants to stay close to where his girlfriend is attending university.

The breakdown in talks could tempt Everton boss Walter Smith to make a second inquiry for the striker, who missed a large part of last season through injury.

Smith has already asked his old friend Ferguson about Solskjaer's availability but was told at the time he was not for sale.

Vogts rings the changes

BONN, Aug 24 (Reuters/Internet): Germany's rebuilding programme began on Monday when eight untried players were named in the squad for next week's friendlies against Malta and Romania.

Coach Berti Vogts also recalled controversial Bayern Munich midfielder Stefan Effenberg as expected.

The newcomers are defenders Mustafa Dogan and Marko Rehmer, midfielders Michael Ballack, Stefan Beinlich, Christian Nerlinger and Marco Reich, and strikers Oliver Neuville and Paulo Rink.

Effenberg has not represented his country since he was kicked off the team for making an obscene gesture to fans at the 1994 World Cup finals.

Vogts had vowed wholesale changes following the shock World Cup quarter-final exit to Croatia last month.

Only 10 of the 24-strong squad for the match against Malta on September 2 and Romania three days later were in France.

Striker Juergen Klinsmann and defenders Thomas Helmer, Juergen Kohler and Olaf Thon have all retired from international soccer.

Goalkeeper Andreas Koepke, defenders Lothar Matthaus and Stefan Reuter and midfielders Steffen Freund, Thomas Haessler, Andreas Moeller and Christian Ziege have all been dropped.

Bayern Munich midfielder Mario Basler, who missed the World Cup through injury, and

Rangers midfielder Joerg Albertz both return.

SQUAD
 Goalkeepers: Oliver Kahn (Bayern Munich), Jens Lehmann (AC Milan)

Defenders: Markus Babel (Bayern Munich), Mustafa Dogan (Fenerbahce), Thomas Linke (Bayern Munich), Jens Nowotny (Bayer Leverkusen), Stephan Passlack (Borussia Moenchengladbach), Marko Rehmer (Hansa Rostock)

Midfielders: Joerg Albertz (Rangers), Michael Ballack (Kaiserslautern), Mario Basler (Bayern Munich), Stefan Beinlich (Bayer Leverkusen), Stefan Effenberg (Bayern Munich), Dieter Hamann (Newcastle United), Joerg Henrich (Fiorentina), Jens Jeremies (Bayern Munich), Christian Nerlinger (Borussia Dortmund), Marco Reich (Kaiserslautern), Michael Tarnat (Bayern Munich)

Strikers: Oliver Bierhoff (AC Milan), Ulf Kirsten (Bayer Leverkusen), Olaf Marschall (Kaiserslautern), Oliver Neuville (Hansa Rostock), Paulo Rink (Bayer Leverkusen)



BERTI VOGTS

Wet Sunday League!

LONDON, Aug 24: Rain ruined Sunday's play in the English 40-over league, with only three matches starting and all seven being abandoned, reports Reuters.

Fewer than 23 overs were possible in total, 13 of them at Riverside, where Lancashire lost four wickets for 43 against Durham.

John Crawley, hoping to celebrate his recall to the England Test team, was out for seven.

The matches between leaders Essex and Gloucestershire, and Kent and Worcestershire were the only others to start.

With all teams receiving two points for an abandonment, Essex and Lancashire moved to 42 points, Essex having the better run-rate.

Warwickshire stayed eight points behind in third place.

Top clubs going ahead

LONDON, Aug 24 (Reuters/Internet): Europe's top clubs pressed ahead with their Super League plans on Monday.

Milan-based company Media Partners, involved in talks with major sides about setting up a European league, was briefing clubs on its meeting with UEFA last week.

"I can confirm Monday's meeting is taking place," a source close to the talks said. "The project is moving ahead with enthusiasm and great momentum."

A UEFA spokesman insisted on Sunday that Europe's governing body had no plans to work with Media Partners on the league. He said that it was not true that UEFA had agreed to review its plans.

But the source said that this comment was "bizarre". Officials closer to the talks had a much different view, he said.

Villa too good for Middlesbrough

LONDON, Aug 24: Aston Villa collected their first win of the new English Premier league season on Sunday when they beat Middlesbrough 3-1 at Villa Park, reports Reuters.

Julian Joachim fired Villa ahead from 12 metres in the sixth minute and they should down by Italian defender Gianluca Festa in the area.

However, Australian goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer dived to his right to save Alan Thompson's penalty.

claiming UEFA was taking two different views in private and in public.

The super league is expected to be on top of the agenda when UEFA's executive board meets in Monaco next weekend. Some observers see the next seven days as the most important week in its history.

A European league seems inevitable in the near future. The main questions now seem to be who will run it and what will happen to the present three competitions -- the European Cup, UEFA Cup and the European Cup Winners' Cup.

Under the Media Partners' plans, the qualification for the league would be based on performances on the pitch.

Organisers are ready to work with the national leagues and UEFA to get it up and running. UEFA would be given the role of regulator.

Meanwhile, Bayern Munich president Franz Beckenbauer said that the proposed European Super League would not harm the Bundesliga.

"A European league would not replace the Bundesliga," the former World Cup-winning captain and coach wrote in the foreword to a history of the Bundesliga published on Monday. "The Bundesliga is a living myth."

German Soccer Federation (DFB) president Egidius Braun hit out at the notion that 16 of the 32 clubs involved in the new tournament would be automatic entrants.

"Football in Germany lives from the excitement that comes from promotion and relegation," he told German private television channel Premiere.

"A Euroleague with 16 clubs that could play for six years without being relegated would not last long... people would soon lose interest."

The Bundesliga book was released 35 years after the league started on August 24, 1963. Before that, teams faced each other in regional groups and the title was decided by a final match.

Inter-college h'ball on

Notre Dame College got off to a sound start in the inter-college handball tournament with a comprehensive 26-13 goal win over BAF Shaheen College at the Mirpur Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium yesterday.

The inaugural match of the 12-team event turned into a one-way traffic after Notre Dame College took an unassailable 13-6 goal lead at the breather. Kanak led the Notre Dame charge with the highest 10 goals. The agile marksman was ably supported by Kadir, who punched in seven goals. For Shaheen College Mesbah fought a lone battle with eight goals.

Earlier, State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader declared the 11-day meet open in a colourful ceremony. The president of the Bangladesh Handball Federation (BHF) MA Hamid was also present on the occasion.

ACB monitoring situation

BRISBANE, Aug 24: Australia's Cricket Board (ACB) has sought advice from the Department of Foreign Affairs about next month's tour of Pakistan because of United States bombings in neighbouring Afghanistan, reports AP.

Australia's cricketers are due to arrive in Pakistan on Sept 23 for three Tests and three one-dayers with another limited over series in between in Bangladesh.

Security concerns have heightened since the US undertook military strikes against alleged terrorist facilities in Afghanistan and Sudan.

"We've sent a letter off to foreign affairs although we had been in touch with them last week before the bombings when the Americans began pulling their people out," team manager Steve Bernard said. "Right now things are in train and we will be guided by any information from foreign affairs, the high commission, the Pakistani board and so on."

A foreign affairs spokesman said the situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan was being monitored and reviewed on a daily basis.

The current advice was to defer all nonessential travel to Pakistan.

"Our travel advices are under constant review and we will monitor the situation in the coming days," the spokesman said.

Australia refused to travel to Sri Lanka for the first game of the 1996 cricket World Cup after seeking advice from foreign affairs and the high commission in Colombo after bombings in that city.

Bernard said it was unlikely the Pakistan tour would be called off but that the safety of the players and team management was paramount.

He said a decision on the tour could be left as late as a few days before departure.

"I'd imagine that it's not something they would pull out of immediately but you'd have to watch it fairly closely," Bernard said. "I would think they will monitor it until fairly close to the tour before making a decision."

The second Test will be played in Peshawar near the Afghanistan border and Khyber Pass.

Australia has had trouble in Peshawar before when players were belted with projectiles, including bottles and a padlock, during a one-day game against South Africa the last time they travelled to Pakistan in 1994.

Bernard and ACB operations manager Richard Watson went to Pakistan earlier this month to seek assurances from Pakistan cricket chief Majid Khan that the players would be safe.

Bernard said they were happy with all tour details.



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hussain Chowdhury speaking during the logo premier of the Wills International Cup cricket at Calcutta on Sunday. The knock-out tournament involving nine-Test playing nations will be held in Dhaka from Oct 24-Nov 2.