

Sri Lanka in command

Star Sport Monitor
 England were 54 for two at the end of the fourth day of the one-off Test against Sri Lanka at The Oval in London yesterday.

The hosts began their second innings with a 146-run deficit and were off to a bad start as they lost opener Mark Butcher and centurion in the first innings Graeme Hick (0) cheaply. But opener Steve James (20 not out) and captain Alec Stewart then took the charge and saw the day off without any further casualty.

Earlier, the tourists added another 145 runs to their overnight total of 446 before being all out in the post-lunch session.

SCOREBOARD

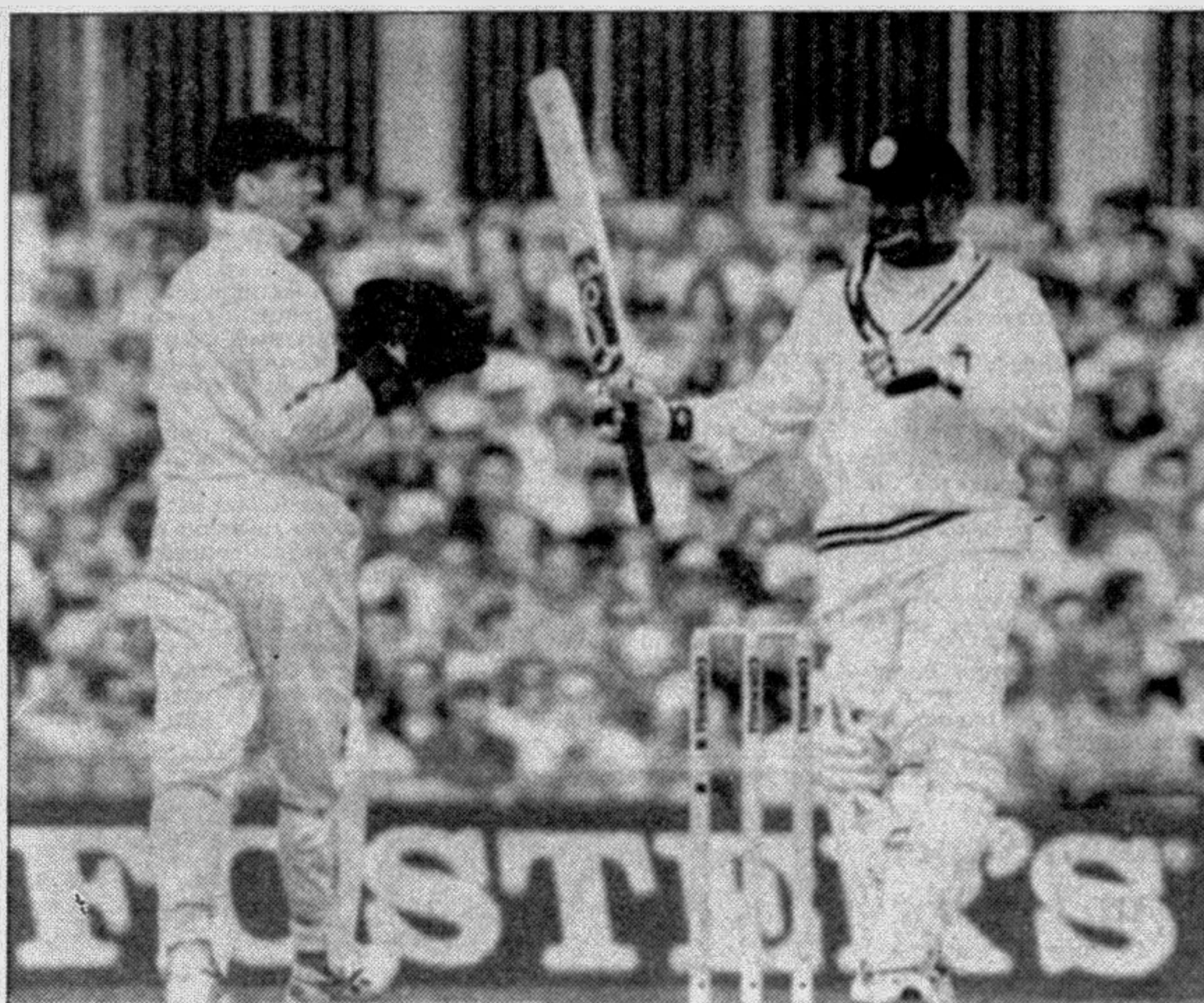
Scoreboard Sunday at tea on the fourth day of the one-off Test between England and Sri Lanka at The Oval:

ENGLAND: First innings 445
SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 446 for three)
 Jayasuriya c Stewart b Holloake 213
 Atapattu lbw b Cork 15
 Jayawardene c Holloake b Fraser 9
 Aravinda c Stewart b Holloake 152
 Ranatunga lbw b Gough 51
 Tillakaratne lbw b Gough 3
 Kaluwitharana c Crawley b Cork 25
 Dharmasena lbw b Fraser 13
 Perera not out 43
 Wickramasinghe b Fraser 0
 Muralitharan c Stewart b Salisbury 30
 Extras: (15-b, 20-lb, 1-w, 4-nb) 40
 Total (all out) 591
 Fall of wickets: 1-53; 2-85; 3-328; 4-450; 5-450; 6-488; 7-504; 8-526; 9-532; 10-591.

Bowler:	O	M	R	W
Gough	30	5	102	2
Fraser	23	3	95	3
Holloake	26	2	105	2
Cork	36	5	128	2
Salisbury	25.5	7	86	1
Ramprakash	5	0	24	0
Butcher	11	2	16	0

ENGLAND: Second innings
 Butcher not out 8
 James not out 5
 Total: (for no loss) 13

Bowler:	O	M	R	W
Wickramasinghe	3	0	9	0
Perera	3	1	4	0
Muralitharan	1	1	0	0



England skipper Alec Stewart (L) applauds after Sri Lanka's master batsman Aravinda de Silva had reached his 150 at The Oval yesterday. — AP/UNB photo

Bosses ponder back-up for Stewart

LONDON, Aug 30 (Press Association Ltd/Internet): England's leading wicket-keepers will be anxiously awaiting a call from David Graveney early next week in the hope of securing a place as Alec Stewart's deputy on this winter's Ashes tour.

Chairman Graveney sits down with fellow selectors Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting over the next two days to formulate the squad for Australia, the 14-man party to contest the Willis International Cup in Bangladesh and the A party to Zimbabwe and South Africa.

But although the majority of the 17-man Ashes squad virtually pick themselves, a wicket-keeper to cover captain Alec Stewart will be at the forefront of the selectors' discussions prior to the announcement of the tour parties at Lord's on Tuesday.

No-one doubts Stewart's quality as both a batsman and



ALEC STEWART

wicketkeeper, but finding the next best in the country is a somewhat more difficult task with up to four or five possible contenders for the spot.

Veteran Jack Russell was recalled for last winter's West Indies tour but was the first to admit he had a bad time behind the stumps and England are expected to look at a number of younger options.

Leicestershire's Paul Nixon has recently had specialist batting coaching from Gooch, while Warren Hegg has performed impressively both behind the stumps and with the bat in helping Lancashire's challenge for three trophies. Keith Piper of Warwickshire will also come into consideration.

Bob Taylor, a veteran of 57 Tests and regarded as one of England's leading all-time stumpers, said: "All of them have certain credentials but I think Warren is the right one to go to Australia."

"He is the best of the three with the gloves, he is also in very good form with the bat and he is very experienced."

Graf's awaited victory

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut, Aug 30: Steffi Graf won her first tournament since May 1997 and the 104th title of her career Saturday, defeating Jana Novotna 6-4, 6-1 in the Pilot Pen International, reports AFP.

The victory marked the first major stepping stone of the German's comeback from injury.

She was out of the game from June of last year after undergoing knee surgery, returning briefly for two tournaments in

February. But it was not until June that she was able to compete regularly once again.

Struggling to make her mark, she lost to Magui Serna in the third round of the Canadian Open last week, and instead of taking a vacation in Florida as she intended, Graf heeded the advice of her coach, Hinz Gunthardt, to play in New Haven.

A weary Novotna played a large part in Graf's victory, failing to compete at all in the second set after being broken to love to concede the first. But the fourth-seeded German deserved

her triumph on the basis of her first set performance alone.

"I was very tired from playing night matches and a lot of tennis this week," said Novotna, who played doubles until after 10 pm the night before the final. "With her you have to be 100 per cent sharp. Steffi was on top of her game."

"The way she played today, I think she is just there she was when she stopped playing. Now the point will be if she can do it from one week to another, how long she can keep it up."

There were virtually no flaws in Graf's game. She moved like a well-oiled machine and struck both her forehand and backhand with precision. Second seeded Novotna matched her in most areas, and made many well-timed approaches to the net. But once she had dropped the first set her challenge fell away dramatically.

Graf broke on lead the first set 3-1. Novotna broke for 2-3 and Graf re-established her lead in the next game to go ahead 4-2 but serving at 5-3, she was beaten by a forehand pass as Novotna earned a reprieve.

Graf's response to that was to break Novotna to love for the set, and the Czech claimed only two points in the first three games of the second set before asking for a toilet break. It made no difference. She returned as lethargic as before and claimed only nine points in the set as Graf stroled to victory.



SOMETHING TO CHEER ABOUT AT LAST: Former world No 1 Steffi Graf of Germany holds aloft the Pilot Pen championship trophy after her win in the final against Jana Novotna of the Czech Republic at New Haven on August 29. Graf won 6-4, 6-1. — AP/UNB photo

BRUSSELS, Belgium, Aug 30: International track stars on Friday demanded next week's final of the Grand Prix season be moved from Moscow because of the economic turmoil gripping Russia, reports AP.

"We feel that its an insult to go to Moscow and leave with million dollar prizes," said US sprint star Jon Drummond.

Drummond said he would present a petition signed by about 50 of the world's top athletes calling for the Grand Prix final scheduled for Sept 5 to be moved to "a more serene venue."

Track stars signing the petition included Morocco's 1,500-metre star Hicham El Guerrouj; Kenya's 3,000-metre world record holder Daniel Komen and World 200-metre and 400-metre champion Michael Johnson, Drummond said.

Stars demand Moscow GP cancellation

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Hooper saves the day

LONDON, Aug 30: A magnificent 157 not out by Carl Hooper saved Kent from defeat in their English county championship match against struggling Northamptonshire on Saturday, reports Reuters.

Kent had resumed on the final day 109 behind with two second innings wickets down. But Hooper and Alan Wells (77) thwarted Northamptonshire's hopes of recording only their third win in 14 first class matches as Kent reached 377 for seven and forced a draw.

Durham's hopes of a first victory in almost three months were dashed by a dogged stand between Derbyshire's Kevin Dean and Michael May.

Derbyshire closed on 269 for nine, 40 ahead.

Shuttlers leave for Bangkok today

A six-member national badminton team will leave here today for Thailand to represent Bangladesh in the JVC Asian badminton championship to be held in Bangkok from September 1-5, reports UNB.

The team comprises five shuttlers, including two women, and an official.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Badminton Federation Zahid Ahmed is the lone official who will lead the team and also attend the annual general meeting of the Asian Badminton Confederation.

Shuttlers: Russel Kabir Sumon, Mahbubur Rab, Mustafa Mohammad Javed, Elna Begum and Ayesha Khatun Noori.

Boksic back in the frame

ZAGREB, Croatia, Aug 30: Alen Boksic, who missed the World Cup because of knee surgery, was recalled Friday to the Croatian national team for the country's Sept 5 European Championship qualifier against Ireland, reports AP.

But seven members of the World Cup bronze-medal winning side were excluded from the roster by coach Miro Blazevic, including midfielder Robert Prosinecki.

Prosinecki, one of Croatia's top playmakers, was left out, presumably because he and Blazevic have not been at loggerheads for years.

In a recent interview, Prosinecki stated categorically he would not play for the national team as long as Blazevic is in charge.

Blazevic recently agreed to a new four-year term as Croatia's coach.

Also among the missing was goalkeeper Drazen Ladic, widely praised for his World Cup performance but asked not to be called.

"He said The World Cup in France was the top of his career and I do not want to force him," Blazevic told the Jutarnji list daily.

Goran Vlaovic and Slaven Bilic have minor injuries and were not named. Midfielder Robert Jarni, who recently signed for Real Madrid, and Igor Tudor, who now plays for Juventus, will join the squad.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Marijan Mrmic (Besiktas), Zeljko Pavlovic (LASK).

Defenders: Igor Stimac (Derby County); Zvonimir Soldo (Stuttgart); Dario Simic (Croatia); Igor Tudor (Juventus); Mario Tokic (Croatia); Mario Cvitanovic (Croatia).

Midfielders: Tomislav Rukavina (Croatia); Aljosa Asanovic (Panathinaikos); Silvio Maric (Croatia); Zvonimir Boban (Milan); Krunoslav Juric (Croatia); Robert Jarni (Real Madrid).

Strikers: Mario Stanic (Parma); Alen Boksic (Lazio); Davor Suker (Real Madrid); Petar Krpan (Osijek).

Laurent to linger

MARSEILLE, France, Aug 30: Defender Laurent Blanc, who missed France's World Cup triumph after being sent off in the semi-finals, said here today he had decided to prolong his international career after all, reports AFP.

Blanc, 32, who had earlier announced he could retire from the French side, made the announcement during a parade in Marseille for several of its World Cup heroes.

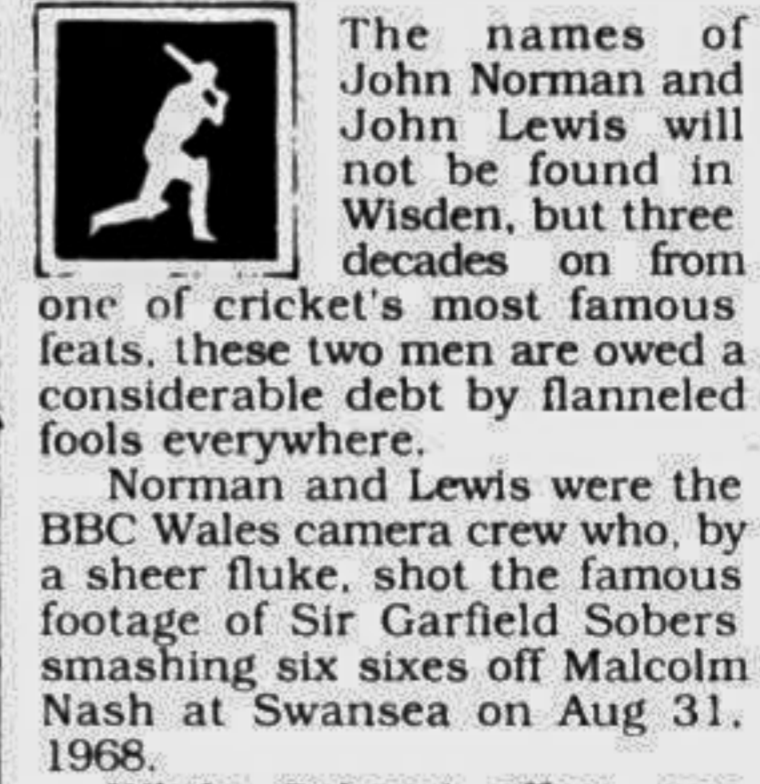
He said he would "take it match by match, to help France qualify for the European Championships in 2000."

Around 50,000 people turned up to see the parade in Marseille French World Cup players Blanc, Didier Deschamps, Christophe Dugarry, Zinedine Zidane and Robert Pires, all current or former Marseille players, passed through the crowds on the open-topped bus.

Blanc was sent off in the World Cup semifinal against Croatia after Croatia's Slaven Bilic collapsed after a tussle between the two players.

A stroke of luck saved Sobers feat for the world

Mike Lewis of The Electronic Telegraph meets the two men who filmed for posterity the great West Indian all-rounder Sir Garfield Sobers making history 30 years ago



The names of John Norman and John Lewis will not be found in Wisden, but three decades on from one of cricket's most famous feats, these two men are owed a considerable debt by flannelled fools everywhere.

Norman and Lewis were the BBC Wales camera crew who, by a sheer fluke, shot the famous footage of Sir Garfield Sobers smashing six sixes off Malcolm Nash at Swansea on Aug 31, 1968.

While Sobers' effort was matched by Ravi Shastri 15 years later, that flickering black-and-white film is a vivid testimony to one of the game's most celebrated moments.

"It was all really a chapter of accidents," said Norman, now 70 and living in retirement near Cardiff. "Every time I see that film I remember our little two-camera unit situated behind and slightly to the left of the batsman, as BBC Wales couldn't afford additional scaffolding to move us."

Placed on stand-by by BBC's Grandstand during the afternoon, producer Norman and cameraman Lewis had transmitted live pictures of the Glamorgan v Nottinghamshire game to BBC Wales viewers.

Then at 4.45pm Grandstand

era running because he wanted to take a look at Sobers through a fixed lens. I rang Derek Griffin, the recording engineer in Cardiff, and told him to switch the tape on, just in case."

The BBC men watched as the West Indian made his way briskly to 40 before the over that was to go into the record books began. Chasing a swift declaration, Sobers despatched

the first four balls of Nash's over into the St Helens crowd.

The fifth ball flew out towards fielder Roger Davis, who held the catch before toppling backwards over the boundary rope. As Sobers waited pensively, and the crowd chanted "Six, Six, Six", the umpires conferred briefly before raising their arms.

Up in the BBC Wales commentary box, commentator Wilf Wooller was becoming increasingly flustered. Perched on his scaffolding, John Lewis was equally tense.

"These days you'd have 10 or 11 cameras at the ground," said Lewis, now 65 and living in Cardiff. "Back then all we had was two and one of those was for close-ups. I was concentrating like hell because I knew if I missed anything there was absolutely no back-up."

Nash came in for a final time and Sobers sent the ball spiralling out of the ground. "My goodness," cried Wooller, "that one's gone all the way down to Swansea."

Fifteen minutes after it was all over the Grandstand producer who had told us to stand down rang back and begged me not to spill the beans," said Norman. The next day the film was sold to 15 countries and Sobers' shots resounded around the world.

Inter-college handball

Bangladesh Rifles School & College and BCIC College emerged group champions to reach the semifinals of the Power inter-college men's handball tournament at the Outer Stadium handball court yesterday, reports UNB.

In the day's first match, Rifles School & College clinched the Group B title beating Govt. Shaheed Suhrawardy College by 10-9 goals after dominating the first half 5-4.

Zahidul scored 3, Shariful and Nurul two each for the winners while Raja netted four and Miraz two for the losers.

In the second match, BCIC College eliminated Govt Titumir College by 6-4 goals after leading the first session by a clear margin of 4-0 goals to lift the Group D title.

Raju and Babu contributed two goals each and Shujan and Roby scored one each for the winners while Sohel and Shafiq netted two each for the losers.

Group A champions Notre Dame College will take on group D champions BCIC College in the first semi at 2:30 pm while Group B Champions Rifles School & College will meet Group C Dhaka Polytechnic Institute in the other semi at 3:30 pm.



TWO OF THE VERY BEST: Superstar Ronaldo (R), who received the trophy for being European footballer-of-the-year for the 1997-98 season, shakes hands with French star Zinedine Zidane who was declared the best midfielder of the same season, at Monaco on August 27. — AP/UNB photo

India to organise WC for visually impaired

NEW DELHI, Aug 30: Preparations are on for the first World Cup cricket tournament for visually impaired people which will feature sound-making balls, metal stumps and customised rules.

The pathbreaking event, organised by the World Blind Cricket Council (WBCC), is slated to be held in New Delhi from November 17 to 28. Besides hosts India and its neighbours Pakistan and Sri Lanka, four other nations — Australia, New Zealand, Britain and South Africa — will participate in 24 one-day international matches of 40 overs each. The organising committee is currently working on the minutest details of the tournament, right from the dress of the players, selection of the stadium, trophy and the mascot for the tournament. The chairman of the committee, George Abraham, is himself a visually handicapped athlete.

Abraham, who took part in the torch relay at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996, is the founder chairman of the WBCC. The two-year-old WBCC is an apex body of the seven national cricket associations for the visually handicapped and has its headquarters in Canberra, Australia.

"Indian President K.R. Narayanan will present the winning trophy and a cash prize of Rs. 1,00,000 (\$2,380). The runners-up would be given Rs. 50,000 (\$1,190)," Abraham told India Abroad News Service.

The selection of the glittering trophy and the mascot for the tournament is in its final stages and would be ready before September 15, he said.

According to the rules evolved for the tournament, each team would be playing with 11 players as usual but drawn from three categories: four of the 11 players will be totally blind; three will be partially blind (visibility not beyond two metres); and rest will be partially sighted (visibility not beyond six metres).

The white plastic ball, each weighing about 90 grams, contains about 18 to 24 ball bearings. The ball bearings make a rattling sound which helps a visually impaired player locate the ball. "The ball from a distance looks like a normal white cricket ball used during a day-night match," Abraham said.

Though the bat would be the usual willow, the stumps would be metallic so that the different sound it makes when hit by a ball enables the players to appeal. The pitch of 25 yards would be divided into two equal portions and the bowler would have to pitch the ball at least once before the halfway mark.

Also, a bowler has to call out "Ready?" before beginning his run-up. "Just before delivering the ball, the bowler should say 'play' to the batsman," Abraham said. Any change in the bowling cycle would be declared as a no-ball, he informed.

The boundary of the cricket ground has been reduced to 50 metres from the normal 75 metres. Every bowler would be entitled to bowl a maximum of eight overs and 40 per cent of the overs must be bowled by totally visually impaired players, the tournament rules say.

Each team would be provided with a colourful dress. The Indian teams would play

Lalit K. Jha

the matches with navy blue T-shirts and beige trousers while the players from Pakistan have been allotted green T-shirts and beige trousers. The South Africans would be playing their matches in colourful bottle-green T-shirts and gray trousers.

The tournament, budgeted at Rs. 12 million (\$285,000), has attracted a sponsorship from Coca-Cola and the Tatlas.

Cricket for the visually impaired was started in India in 1990 by Abraham's organisation SCORE (Society for Communication and Research). Though other countries too have had domestic tournaments for the visually impaired, and the first international cricket match was between Australia and New Zealand in 1994, World Cup '98 is the first international event of its size and importance, Abraham said.

— India Abroad News Service

Schools chess

Fourteen players jointly lead the 13th Bata schools chess tournament securing full three points after the third round matches at the NSC chess room yesterday, reports UNB.

Russel beat Javed, Parag beat Al Amin, Royal beat Khurshed, Ratul beat Sabuj, Farhad beat Mozammel, Sabbir beat Tajul, Masud beat Nazmul, Sagar beat Arif, Anwar beat Suprakash, Nazir beat Saddam, Bari beat Zia, Mostan beat Afif, Shahadat beat Nahid, Arif beat Sajib, Ataur beat Makhdam, and Obaid beat Mustafa.