

Sport

Vasco get insured before facing violent Palmeiras

RIO DE JANEIRO, Nov 7 (Reuters/Internet): Brazilian champions Vasco da Gama said on Friday they were taking out special insurance for a match against Palmeiras because their opponents were violent.

Club vice-president Eurico Miranda said he had also sent a fax to the Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) claiming that Palmeiras coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, popularly known as Felipao (Big Phil), encouraged rough play.

Scolari hit back with personal remarks, which appeared to be aimed at Miranda, a member of the Brazilian Congress.

Miranda said his fax had asked the CBF to give the weekend match special attention "because of the well-known lack of sporting ethics and because of the violence which characterise that coach and, lamentably, the teams he coaches".

He said Vasco's insurance was to cover "personal accidents" for the players.

Rivalry between the two clubs is high after Vasco failed to turn up for the match in October and left Scolari claiming his team had been made to look like clowns.

Vasco said they were prevented from playing by a court injunction that guaranteed players at least 66 hours between matches.

But the CBF decided to postpone the match only one hour before kickoff, by which time Palmeiras were already at the stadium and tickets had gone on sale.

Scolari, an abrasive character known for speaking his mind, is one of Brazil's most successful coaches but has often been criticised for the way his teams play.

He says he merely demands his teams play "virile" football and frequently denies he has ever ordered players to injure opponents.

He was backed by Vasco defender Mauro Galvao, who played under Scolari at Gremio and said he had never been ordered to use violence.

Miranda is also a controversial figure in the Brazilian game and seems to take pleasure in disrupting championships with judicial measures.

He has also picked a fight with the CBF by insisting that Vasco will not play next week's match away to Goias because the date of the game has been changed.

On one occasion, he ran onto the field to protest a refereeing decision and claimed parliamentary immunity when police tried to make him leave the field.

Toronto bids for Evander-Lennox title bout

TORONTO, Nov 7: Canada is bidding 10 million dollars to stage an Evander Holyfield-Lennox Lewis heavyweight title fight in the SkyDome. The problem is that the money is in Canadian dollars.

Translated into American dollars, the Canadian offer is about 6.5 million dollars, about 1.5 million shy of what promoter Don King is asking and well off the 8.3 million dollars bid of New York's Madison Square Garden, reports AP.

Despite the dollar difference, the Toronto offer hasn't been dismissed.

"We've offered a good package, and now we're getting down to the brass tacks of our negotiations," said Martin Porter, head of marketing for Canadian Major Events.

Lewis and CME are to meet Monday with representatives for Holyfield and HBO to discuss the offer.

Adrian Teodorescu, Lewis' former coach and a member of CME, says Lewis is interested in fighting in Canada.

"Lennox would definitely like to have a fight here in Canada where he is loved and where he brought home the (1988 Olympic gold medal)," he said. "Lennox wants to revitalise boxing in Canada."

Officials at Madison Square Garden refused to comment on negotiations for the bout.

Las Vegas was also in the bidding for the fight, but dropped out last week to concentrate on organising Mike Tyson's comeback bout, tentatively scheduled for January 16.

The Holyfield-Lewis bout would be staged March 13, with organisers hoping to draw 67,000 at prices ranging from 55 to 1,500 dollars Canadian, or 36 to 975 American dollars.

Marseille clear further

PARIS, Nov 7: Olympique Marseille, a man short for an hour, snatched a 1-0 home victory over Monaco in injury time to go five points clear at the top of the French First Division on Friday, reports Reuters.

Substitute striker Florian Maurice scored a dramatic winner two minutes into injury time when Monaco, now 10 points adrift of the leaders, had looked the more likely to score as the home side tried.

Marseille strengthened this season, had midfielder Peter Lucini sent off in the 32nd minute for a dangerous lunge at Monaco's Bosnian centre-back Muhamed Konjic, who was carried off with a leg injury.

Monaco also finished with 10 men after Croatian striker Robert Spehar was dismissed for a second bookable offence, a tackle from behind on Robert Pires, two minutes from time.

France striker David Trezeguet almost snatched victory of Monaco eight minutes from the end but his header from a cross from the left was just wide of the near post.

Bacher hoping against hope?

LONDON, Nov 7 (Reuters/Internet): South African cricket chief Ali Bacher said on Saturday he was confident the West Indies tour to his country would go ahead.

Asked on BBC radio if the first Test of the series would start as planned in Johannesburg on November 26, Bacher said he was "extremely confident".

Rebel West Indian players, headed by sacked captain Brian Lara, are in dispute with the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB) over pay and conditions for the tour.

They were joined on Friday by the remainder of the West Indies squad who arrived with Bacher and tour manager Clive Lloyd from Johannesburg.

Day-long talks at a Heathrow hotel failed to bring a solution. It is understood the players have been considering a proposal that could save the tour.

South African and Caribbean officials however were expected to begin hard bargaining Saturday with the rebel cricketers.

But, sources close to the team said the players were still talking among themselves and were extremely unlikely to expect a positive result from the West Indies officials soon.

Sources close to the team reported one player as saying: "We're in no hurry and it could easily go into next week."

Friday began with the arrival of South African cricket chief Ali Bacher carrying letters from South African President Nelson Mandela to each of the 16 players urging them to tour.

However, after receiving the letters, the players spent all day in a meeting in their hotel -- a five-minute walk from another hotel where Bacher and the West Indies management were staying.

Late in the afternoon Bacher emerged to say that Courtney Walsh, president of the players association, was still in talks with the rest of the squad but he and the management team of Clive Lloyd and Joel Garner hoped to meet them later.

Bacher, who personally handed Mandela's letters to Walsh, said he hoped a meeting would go ahead soon but did not know when.

"It's important to all younger players in South Africa," Bacher quoted Mandela as saying, "I'm sure that everyone in the West Indies understands that."

Bacher told reporters he was convinced the problem could be resolved.

"I am confident there will be a resolution," he said. "He is a good man, a quality man and is very warmly disposed towards coming to South Africa," Bacher said of Walsh.

"They (the players) want the tour to take place."

However, by early evening there was still no meeting between the two sides and the affair seemed likely to drag on into another day.

Lloyd, protesting at "gross victimisation", promptly resigned and was joined by the other five Packer players selected for the third Test.

To add fuel to the flames, Packer flew into Barbados and appealed to popular sympathy by appearing on television to state the undeniable truth that West Indian players had been underpaid in the past.

The dispute was not resolved and the WICB fielded a second-string side for the remainder of the series.

In 1979 Packer won his battle when the Australian authorities granted him television rights and the Packer series was disbanded.

Lloyd went on to become the most successful captain in West Indies' history, leading one of the most powerful teams in history before retiring in 1985.

Recalled to take charge of the West Indies' team in a difficult era for Caribbean cricket, Lloyd was joined on Friday by Joel Garner, now a member of the WICB and manager of the West Indies' A team's tour of Bangladesh.

Garner could be forgiven for a feeling of *deja vu* also.

In 1978, the giant fast bowler was one of the quintet who pulled out of the West Indies' team after Lloyd's resignation.

Bacher said there had to be a resolution to the dispute, adding: "It is too important for South Africa and West Indies cricket."

"It is still early days but I would like to think that by the end of the weekend we would be able to resolve this."

The WICB sacked Lara and his deputy Carl Hooper on Wednesday and the row quickly escalated when other players also in London refused to join the tour.

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THE EMISSARY ... South Africa's cricket chief Dr Ali Bacher showing the letter of President Nelson Mandela to the rebel West Indian cricketers in London on Friday.

Lloyd: Life's little irony

LONDON, Nov 7 (Reuters/Internet): Foecher turned gamekeeper Clive Lloyd found himself on Friday once again at the centre of a row threatening to divide West Indies' cricket.

Twenty years ago, Lloyd led a revolt against the West Indies' authorities during an Australian tour of the Caribbean.

Lloyd resigned as official West Indies' captain and was joined by most of his team during the height of Kerry Packer's World Series Cricket rebel series.

A generation later, Lloyd, now the West Indies' team manager, has joined South African cricket chief Ali Bacher in an effort to rescue the first West Indies' tour of South Africa.

The pair are here to settle a pay dispute which has threatened the tour.

Money lies at the heart of both disputes.

In 1977 Australian media millionaire Packer, rebuffed in his attempt to win television rights to Test cricket, responded by setting up his own series, featuring most of the world's best players who were paid handsomely for their labours.

Packer signed the entire West Indies' Test side, with the exception of Alvin Kalliaracharan, and threatened to split the game permanently.

The following year, Australia toured the Caribbean and the West Indies' authorities, whose financial basis is slender

at the best of times, decided to pick their Packer players for the first Test.

An uneasy relationship between the WICB and the players was strained further when wicketkeeper Deryck Murray, spokesman for the West Indies' players association, was dropped as Lloyd's vice-captain.

The WICB argued that Murray was getting on in years and miffed the team by appointing

the board maintaining that they needed to blood players for an upcoming tour of India. The Packer players would have been unavailable because of their commitments to the rebel series.

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SA: After the apartheid

CAPE TOWN, Nov 7 (AFP/Internet): A report, which lambasts major South African sports, including cricket and rugby, for not transforming since apartheid ended, was adopted by the parliamentary committee on sport and recreation Wednesday.

The report will be submitted to parliament to decide how to improve further racial equality in sport which, during apartheid, became the fiefdom of whites to the complete exclusion of blacks.

The report was compiled by the committee after a series of public grillings of officials from the main sporting codes.

It said sport was moving in the right direction and some federations were going out of their way to afford direct victims of apartheid the opportunity to excel in sport.

This group included athletics, soccer, amateur golf, baseball, table tennis, volleyball, basketball, amateur boxing, karate, wrestling and squash.

The report is particularly scathing on the powerful rugby union federation, which more than any other sporting code came to epitomise white arrogance during apartheid to the point where rugby was regarded by blacks as "a white man's game."

The report said racism is still rife within rugby, with white teams refusing to go into black townships to play fixtures, selectors choosing all-white teams and black clubs being neglected by development programmes.

The South African Rugby Football Union is of the opin-

ion that education is the only way to rid the sport of racism, but the committee is of the opinion that SARFU must take a vigorous and ruthless stance against perpetrators and ensure that rugby belongs to all.

Crickets came off better than rugby, but the committee said it had been dissatisfied with some comments and answers given by cricket officials during their presentation to the committee. They did not elaborate.

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Intriguing ties in prospect

GENEVA, Nov 7: The third round of the UEFA Cup will feature intriguing all-French and all-Spanish encounters, reports AP.

Friday's draw in Geneva resulted in head-to-head showdowns between Monaco and Olympique Marseille and Real Sociedad and Atletico Madrid.

Monaco and Real Sociedad will be at home for the first leg games on Nov 24. The second leg is scheduled for Dec 8.

In past years, UEFA has separated teams from the same country in the draw. But this time, with four teams each from France and Spain, and at least three from Italy, it was impossible to keep clubs apart.

Italian clubs, which have won seven of the last 10 UEFA Cups, were fortunate not to have been drawn against each other.

Title favourites Parma were pitted against Scottish side Glasgow Rangers, Roma against FC Zurich and Bologna vs. Real Betis. The first legs will be played in Glasgow, Zurich and Bologna.

Florentina, a fourth Italian club, will likely not make it into the third round. The club's second-round, second-leg game against Swiss side Grasshoppers was abandoned at halftime Tuesday after an off-field official was injured by the explosion of a device thrown from the stands in Salerno, Italy.

UEFA is scheduled to announce the outcome of the game Sunday, with Florentina facing the likelihood of a 3-0 forfeit defeat and the possibility of a European ban.

Whichever team is selected to advance will host French club Bordeaux in the first leg of the fourth round.

The fourth French club, Lyon are home against Belgian side Brugge.

Liverpool, England's only survivors were drawn against Spanish side Celta Vigo, who eliminated English Premier League leaders Aston Villa from the competition on Tuesday. Celta are at home for the first leg.

It's the first time four French clubs have reached the third round of the UEFA Cup. A French team has never won the competition, while Real Madrid were the last Spanish club to capture the UEFA Cup in 1986.

No German clubs made it to the final 16 this year.

French club officials expressed frustration that Monaco and Marseille would face each other.

"Monaco is a team which is like Roma, Parma or Liverpool -- a team we really didn't want to draw," Olympique Marseille's Jean-Michel Roussier said. "It's a shame for French soccer that we're not to be together."

"It's not the worst draw but it's certainly not the best," Monaco vice president Max Poggi said. "For French soccer this is really not a good draw. It's a shame but that's the luck of the draw."

By coincidence, the same two clubs meet Friday night in an important French league match. Marseille tops the French standings, while Monaco is in fourth place.

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David mad at his men

ADELAIDE, Nov 7 (Reuters/Internet): David Lloyd delivered a stinging attack on his top-order batsmen after England were bundled out for just 187 against South Australia on Saturday.

South Australia replied with 26 for no wicket by the close of the first day of the four-day match.

The England coach said he was furious with his leading players for not making proper use of a wicket tailor-made for batting.

"The shot selection from everyone was pretty poor...the batting was clearly not good enough," Lloyd said.

"We haven't covered ourselves in glory and there is only one way to go -- up. We just have to do much better than that."

England collapsed to 22 for four in the opening session before the middle-order restored some semblance of respectability to the score.

Nasser Hussain, fresh from his century in England's most recent match against Western Australia, continued his good form with 57.

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Another Graf milestone

LEIPZIG, Nov 7: German tennis star Steffi Graf on Friday set a new all-time career-earnings record for a sportswoman after beating Anne-Gaëlle Sidot of France 7-5, 6-3 in her Leipzig Grand Prix quarter final, reports AFP.

Graf, making a renewed comeback after two months out with a wrist injury, has now won a staggering 20,348,992 dollars since making her debut on October 18, 1982.

On Thursday, the 29-year-old announced she had decided to continue her career after rising above a catalogue of injury problems which almost persuaded her to quit.

But she recognised that "Tennis is my life," and immediately set her sights on winning the 450,000 dollars WTA indoor tournament here for a fifth time.

Graf, who spent a record 377 weeks as world number one, has now just topped Martina Navratilova in the earnings table, Czech born American Navratilova racked up 20,344,061 dollars in her illustrious 21-year-old career.

"Records like that show that you have had success in your life, but they don't count for much for me," said the seven-

time Wimbledon champion who is still not entirely giving up on her fading chance of overhauling Margaret Court's Grand Slam title record of 24. Graf has won 21.

Friday's victory was Graf's 860th win in 975 matches, and she said her performance had given her much satisfaction, given that she is competing as a non-seed at an event for the first time in 13 years.

"I wasn't expecting such a performance," said Graf, who is targeting her 105th title.

"I am moving well, fighting pretty well, I am managing to turn situations around and I am further on than I thought," she added after taking her unbeaten run at Leipzig to 23.

Graf next faces Belgium's experienced Dominique Van Roost for a place in the final.

French teenager Sidot, ranked 74th in the world, might have expected to cause another upset after Wednesday's win over top seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain.

But she let slip a 5-3 lead in the opening set and Graf needed no further bidding to finish off the match in 79 minutes. Sidot, who came through the qualifiers, can only dream of emulating Graf's riches -- she has yet to win half a million dollars.

Larsson sidelined

STOCKHOLM, Nov 7: Magnus Larsson, a potential entry for defending champion Sweden in the Davis Cup finals against Italy next month, underwent successful surgery in his right wrist Friday and will be sidelined at least three months, reports AP.

Larsson, 28, a former top 10 player, will also miss next week's Stockholm Open, one of the oldest indoor tournaments in the world, and the Australian Open in January.

"Three months is a long time, but I think Magnus will be hungry to play competitively again in February," said his coach Carl-Axel Hageskog, who also is Sweden's Davis Cup coach.

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England shot out for 187

ADELAIDE, Nov 7: England captain Alec Stewart and former skipper Mike Atherton returned to duty Saturday but the Ashes tourists were bowled out for a disappointing 187 by South Australia, report AP.

Stewart (0) and Atherton