

Nedved injured

PRAGUE, Nov 17: The Czech team will be missing its top star, Lazio Roma midfielder Pavel Nedved, in Wednesday's friendly against England at Wembley, reports AP.

According to team spokesman Jaroslav Kolar, Nedved tore his knee ligament in an Italian Serie A match and is forced to rest for at least a week.

He will be replaced by Miroslav Baranek of Sparta Prague.

Coach Josef Chovanec intends to field at least eight players who took the Czech team to the Euro '96 final two years ago, losing to Germany in overtime at Wembley.

They include midfielders Karel Poborsky of Benfica Lisbon, Radek Bejbi of Atletico Madrid and striker Vladimir Smicer of racing Lens.

"Some players don't get to play at Wembley ever, and for me this will be the second time in two years," said Patrik Berger, who scored the Czechs' only goal in the final and now plays for Liverpool.

The Czech team currently leads the qualifying Group 9, challenging Scotland for a berth in Euro 2000.

Wednesday's friendly will be good practice before the qualifier against Scotland in the spring, Chovanec said.

SQUAD

Pavel Kouba, Vladimir Maier, Martin Kotulek, Lubos Kozel, Jiri Novotny, Tomas Repka, Radek Bejbi, Patrik Berger, Radek Latol, Jiri Nemecek, Karel Poborsky, Radek Solnick, Miroslav Baranek, Roman Vonesek, Pavel Kuka, Rvatislav Lokvenc, Vladimir Smicer.

Bayern's highest

MUNICH, Germany, Nov 17: German league leaders Bayern Munich announced a record annual turnover here on Monday of 123 million dollars, reports AFP.

An annual general meeting was told the 1997-98 figures represented a rise of 20 million dollars from the 103 million recorded the previous year.

Profits, meanwhile, rose from 9.4 million dollars to 9.9 million.

The club, however, has decided not to rush into being listed on the stock exchange, with manager Uli Hoenes arguing Bayern was earning enough from its current marketing of products and from its television rights and sponsorship.

Soccer scandal in South Korea

SEOUL, Nov 17 (AFP/Internet): Prosecutors have filed charges of corruption against 29 South Korean soccer officials including the head coach of the national youth team, officials announced Tuesday.

Offers charged include coaches for high school and university teams. Reports said a referee was charged with match-fixing but the report could not be confirmed.

More than 10 parents of youths who allegedly bribed coaches to get their sons get into college teams or to play in certain matches are also under investigation.

"We are looking into the allegations," said an official at the Korean Football Association (KFA). But no immediate action will be taken against national youth team coach Park Chang-Sun, who is alleged to have accepted cash in return for favours.

"It is not the final verdict and we don't plan to take any action like firing him. We will wait and seriously watch the matter," the official said.

Park Sang-in, a former top player in South Korea, was allegedly charged of accepting 16,730 US dollar on 12 different occasions while coach of a high school team in the southern city of Pusan.

News reports quoted prosecutors as saying that of the 16 people who gave bribes to coaches had all managed to influence college and team selection.

One referee of high school matches is alleged to have fixed a game on the request of a school coach, the Kyung Hyang daily said.

Portugal out to prove a point

LISBON Nov 17 (Reuters/Internet): Portugal will be out to avenge one of the most humiliating international defeats of their soccer history when they face Israel in a friendly on Wednesday.

The last time the two met was in 1981 when a 4-1 defeat in Israel ended Portugal's chances of qualifying for the 1982 World Cup finals in Spain.

Portuguese coach Humberto Coelho will have to do without inspirational striker Joao Vieira Pinto of Benfica and Porto central defender Jorge Costa for the clash in Setubal.

Under pressure from the two clubs, who meet in the league on Saturday and also have European matches next week, Coelho agreed to only call up one player from each side.

The decision gives a chance to Sporting Lisbon's 18-year-old star Simao Sabrosa, who has been included in the squad for the first time.

Israel welcome back Brescia's Tal Banin, who will don the captain's armband after a year's absence.

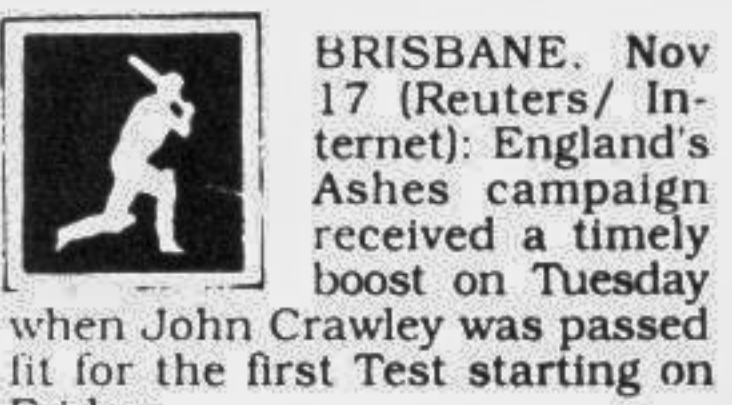
Banin, sidelined for a year with a knee injury, came on as substitute in Israel's European championship qualifiers against San Marino and Spain in September, but coach Shlomo Scharf will start the inspirational midfielder for the first time since August 1997.

He will also field striker Ronnen Harazi, who plays for Bursaspor of Turkey and West Ham's Eyal Berkovic.



Romario, the mercurial Brazilian striker, gives a thumbs up to the pressmen during a conference at his bar Cafe do Gol in Rio de Janeiro on November 16. Do Gol will be opened to the public on Thursday. - AP/UNB photo

England physio joins injury list Lancs pair cleared for first Test



MIKE ATHERTON An embarrassed Morton told reporters that he damaged the shoulder during a team practice session. He joined a line of English players who have been struck down in bizarre circumstances before the first Test has even started.

BRISBANE, Nov 17 (Reuters/Internet): England's Ashes campaign received a timely boost on Tuesday when John Crawley was passed fit for the first Test starting on Friday.

Crawley was in doubt for the match after he was beaten up by a drunk in Cairns at the weekend but was cleared to play after seeing a team doctor on Tuesday.

England opener Michael Atherton, who is in doubt after aggravating an old back injury, is also confident of playing after seeing a specialist.

Atherton had a scan and a painkilling injection to his lower back and faces a fitness test on Wednesday.

Crawley was still sporting several cuts and bruises on his face when he turned up at a team training session in Brisbane on Tuesday.

He was eventually passed fit after his eyebrow was glued back together.

England physiotherapist Wayne Morton said Crawley had been lucky to escape with minor injuries.

But their injury-plagued cricket tour of Australia suffered a bizarre twist on Tuesday when the physiotherapist himself dislocated his own shoulder.

The following week, Butcher and off spinner Peter Such needed medical treatment after they clashed heads during a game of tag.

However, Atherton did not take part in Tuesday's 60-minute fielding session at the Gabba in Brisbane after seeing a back specialist.

But Morton said the former England captain would train on Wednesday and he expected him to play on Friday.

"He's probably played when he was captain a lot worse than he is now," Morton said.

"He's had spinal surgery nearly nine years ago but he does have a tremendous injury record."

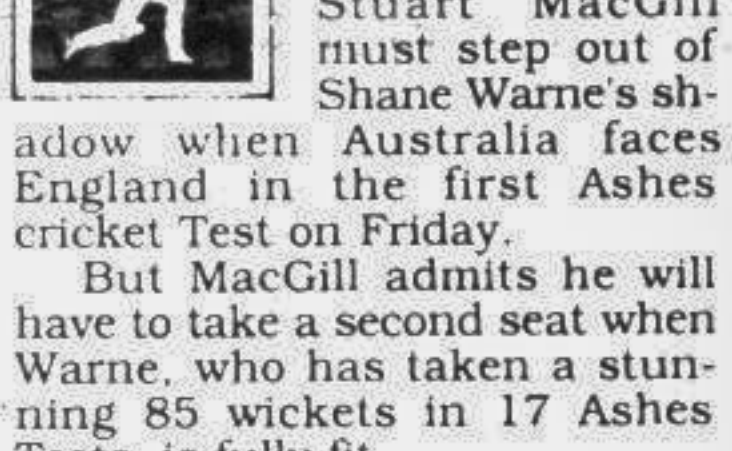
"I think he's only missed one or two games in five or six years of test cricket through back injury."

England physio joins injury list

Lancs pair cleared for first Test

BRISBANE, Nov 17 (Reuters/Internet): England's Ashes campaign received a timely boost on Tuesday when John Crawley was passed fit for the first Test starting on Friday.

MacGill waits for the moment



STUART MCGILL about it. "I think perhaps if I was bowling well at the time, then I'd be unlucky but the way it is that Shane's the best spinner so he gets the game and I've got no illusions about that."

BRISBANE, Australia, Nov 17 (AFP/Internet): Stuart MacGill must step out of the shadow when Australia faces England in the first Ashes cricket Test on Friday.

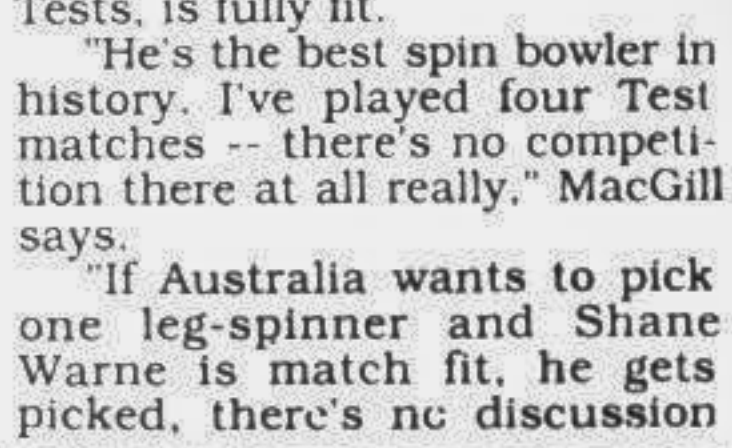
But MacGill admits he will have to take a second seat when Warne, who has taken a stunning 85 wickets in 17 Ashes Tests, is fully fit.

"He's the best spin bowler in history. I've played six Test matches -- there's no competition there at all really," MacGill says.

"If Australia wants to pick one leg-spinner and Shane Warne is match fit, he gets picked, there's no discussion about it."

MacGill waits for the moment

Pete to put his ranking on line



PETE SAMPRAS many possibilities. For Rios to finish No. 1, he has to win at least two matches in Hanover -- and win one more

MONTE CARLO, Monaco, Nov 17 (AFP/Internet): Pete Sampras' bid to finish No. 1 in the ATP Tour rankings for a record sixth straight time will be decided in the year's final tournament.

It comes down to next week's ATP Tour World Championship in Hanover, Germany. Sampras is the top seed, with Chile's Marcelo Rios -- his only rival for the No. 1 ranking -- seeded No. 2. In the rankings, Sampras has 3,703 points, Rios has 3,670.

After Sampras lost in the first round last week in Stockholm, Sweden, Rios could have regained the No. 1 spot he held earlier this year by winning the tournament in Santiago, Chile. But Rios lost in the quarterfinals.

If Sampras wins the round-robin tournament in Hanover, he finishes No. 1. The same is for Rios. Anything short of that and the chase for No. 1 offers

many possibilities. For Rios to finish No. 1, he has to win at least two matches in Hanover -- and win one more

ish as No. 1, no matter what he does in Hanover.

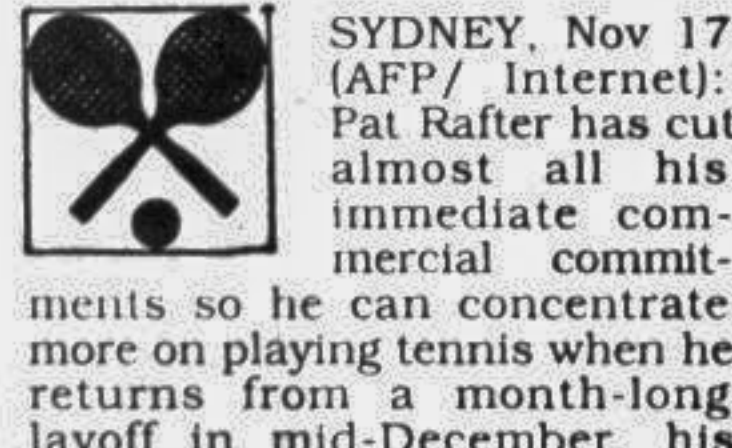
"It's very close race, we can say that," said ATP Tour spokesman Nicola Arzani. "We can say Sampras has the upper hand, but Rios still has a chance."

This is the first time since 1995 that the ATP Tour World Championship has had a bearing on the No. 1 season-ending ranking. In '95, Sampras and Thomas Muster both had a chance to finish No. 1, but Muster eliminated himself by losing his three matches.

In addition to Sampras and Rios, the eight-man field for the tournament includes Andre Agassi, Carlos Moya, Alex Corretja, Karol Kucera, Tim Henman and Yegeny Kafelnikov.

The draw is next Monday, with Sampras and Rios seeded atop the two round-robin groups. Under the tournament format, the top two players after the three round-robin matches advance to the semifinals.

Rafter hiding out to recharge



PATRICK RAFTER Cup captain John Newcombe in 1974.

SYDNEY, Nov 17 (AFP/Internet): Pat Rafter has cut almost all his immediate commercial commitments so he can concentrate more on playing tennis when he returns from a month-long layoff in mid-December, his manager said Tuesday.

Steve Rafter, his manager and brother, said Pat over-committed himself in Australia earlier this year and too many tournaments throughout the season affected his performance.

"He won't be doing any press unless he has to, he's just trying to keep all that low key and just relax," Steve Rafter said.

"He needs to cut it back and try to keep things a little bit sane for himself."

Rafter is taking a break at his home in Bermuda before returning to Australia for Christmas following his most successful year on the ATP Tour, which included six singles titles including his defence of the U.S. Open.

A knee injury brought the 25-year-old's season to a premature close earlier this month, forcing him to relinquish his chance to become the first Australian to claim the No. 1 world ranking since Davis

Wimbledon makes record profit

LONDON, Nov 16: Thanks to record crowds and the success of Britain's Tim Henman, this year's Wimbledon tennis championships produced a record profit of 33 million pounds (\$52.8 million dollars), reports AP.

The Lawn Tennis Association announced Monday that the Wimbledon surplus rose by 6.7 per cent over last year, due to improved TV and merchandising income and record 13-day crowds of 424,998 -- up 20,000 on the previous mark.

The LTA said Wimbledon "held off the challenge" of soccer's World Cup, which was taking place in France at the same time in June and July.

The LTA reported increased sales of merchandise at the tournament featuring both Henman, who reached the semifinals, and fellow Brit Greg Rusedski, who withdrew with an ankle injury during his first-round match.

The LTA said the semifinal match between Henman and eventual champion Pete Sampras attracted 12 million television viewers in Britain, making it one of the top televised sporting events of the year.

It's been a bumper year for British tennis, with Henman and Rusedski both breaking into the top 10, Rusedski winning an elite "Super 9" tournament in Paris, Henman defeating Andre Agassi in the final of the Swiss Open, and Britain returning to the World Group of the Davis Cup for the first time since 1992.

All star cast for Azzurri centenary

PARIS, Nov 17 (AFP): Rest of world squad invited on Monday to play Italy on December 16 in Rome to celebrate Italian Football Federation's centenary (player, country/club):

Goalkeepers: Claudio Taffarel (Bra/Galatassary), Gianluca Pagliuca (Ita/Inter Milan).

Defenders: Lothar Matthaus (Ger/Bayern Munich), Fernando Hierro (Spa/Real Madrid), Yoo Sang-hul (Kor), Taribo West (Ngr/Inter Milan), David Nyathi (RSA/Cagliari), Cafu (Bra/AS Roma), Lilian Thuram (Fra/Parma), Claudio Suarez (Mex/Guadalajara), Roberto Carlos (Bra/Real Madrid).

Midfielders: Julien Guerrero (Spa/Athletic Bilbao), Zinedine Zidane (Fra/Juventus), Joao Pinto (Por/Benfica), Dunga (Bra/Jubilo Iwata), Luis Hernandez (Mex/Nezcas), Manuel Rui (Por/Fiorentina), Hidetoshi Nakata (Jpn/Perugia), Claciaco Sforza (Sui/FK Kaiserauer), Edgar Davids (Ned/Juventus).

Forwards: Andrei Shevchenko (Ukr/Dynamo Kiev), Raul (Spa/Real Madrid), Marcelo Salas (Chi/Lazio), Davor Suker (Cro/Real Madrid), Oliver Bierhoff (Ger/AC Milan), George Weah (Lib/AC Milan), Ronaldo (Bra/Inter Milan), Gabriel Batistuta (Arg/Fiorentina).

McEnroe shows 'who's the boss'

ZAGREB, Croatia, Nov 17 (AFP/Internet): John McEnroe claimed his 12th seniors title Monday, outlasting Frenchman Guy Forget 6-1, 7-6 (7-4) in the ATP Senior Tour of Champions.

McEnroe played in similar fashion to his glory days, attacking the net forcefully and firing several aces.

"I wanted to show these young guys who's the boss," McEnroe, 39, said.

Forget, 33, the youngest competitor on the senior tour, struggled. Often, his shots flew erratically off court.

He led 1-0 in the opening set, then lost the next six games. In the second set, Forget played better, but McEnroe was too good.

To the delight of the crowd, the match was not without a "Mac Attack" -- where McEnroe challenges a line call and argues with the umpire. He did that midway during the second set tiebreaker.

In the consolation match, Henri Lecotte of France got a walkover victory over Mats Wilander, when the Swede withdrew because of a fever.

Testing time for Swiss, Hungarians

BUDAPEST, Nov 17 (Reuters/Internet): Hungary and Switzerland face each other in a friendly on Wednesday in Budapest, as they both attempt to rebuild their squads and their fading hopes of European Championship qualification.

An away win over Azerbaijan and a spirited 1-1 draw at home to Romania in October have boosted Hungarian confidence after a 3-1 home defeat to Portugal in their European Championship group seven opener.

But Hungary coach Bertalan Bicskei is aware that Switzerland, looking for their first win since new coach Gilbert Gress took charge in March, will be tough opponents.

Gilbert Gress has assembled a very good side," said Bicskei. "Of course we want to win but if it doesn't turn out that way the game will still be useful. Playing against good opponents highlights your faults."

Bicskei will be without the injured MTK Budapest midfielder pairing of Gabor Halmai and Bela files, meaning his young side will be without the only two players with significant international experience.

Hertha Berlin's Pal Dardai and Ferencvaros' Otto Vincze are the likely midfield replacements.

Switzerland lost their opening European Championship group one qualifier 2-0 to Italy and then drew 1-1 with Denmark.

Crawley manhandled



BRISBANE, Nov 17 (AP/AF): England's cricketers have been warned to be on guard when walking Australian streets after batsman John Crawley suffered cuts and bruises to his face when assaulted Sunday night.

known assailant after being verbally abused.

Crawley was not wearing clothes that identified him as a member of England's Ashes squad and team officials denied Crawley was subject to racial abuse prior to the attack.

Gooch, who described the attack as unprovoked, said Crawley suffered general bruising to his face, cuts and bruises above both eyes and a cut above the top lip as a result of the assault.

The England team manager said Crawley was verbally abused and then punched in the face by the assailant, causing the cricketer to fall to the ground.

He said the incident happened as Crawley was returning alone on foot to the Radisson Plaza Hotel in Cairns city centre.

"John was naturally upset by the matter but other than cuts and bruises to his face he is fine and fully fit," Gooch said.

Gooch said he had spoken to Cairns police on Tuesday but Crawley had insisted no action be taken.

He said the Lancashire batsman wanted to forget about the incident and focus on the first Test against Australia starting at the Gabba on Friday.

"It's done and there's nothing we can do about it," Gooch said.

"Having spoken to John, he wants to forget about the incident and concentrate on his cricket... he doesn't want to take any action as far as police are concerned."

Cairns police spokesman Phil Tori said police should have been informed.

"We can't investigate unless these incidents are reported, and the sooner we know about it the better chance we have of locating those involved," he said.

Cairns Mayor Tom Pync said Tuesday he would write a letter of apology to the team.

"I'd like to catch the bloke who did this and give him a good boot up the backside," Pync said.

Crawley did not attend the final day's play against Queensland on Monday, spending the day at the team hotel resting.

Gooch said the injuries were unlikely to prevent Crawley from playing in the first Test starting on Friday.

Italy-Spain friendly today



MILAN, Nov 17: Italy take on Spain on Wednesday night in a friendly between the two biggest flops of the last World Cup, reports AFP.

Del Piero joined World Cup centre forward Christian Vieri on the casualty list, with the latest addition coming on Sunday when Inter's 20 year old ace Nicola Ventola twisted knee ligaments.

Filippo Inzaghi will lead the attack alongside AS Roma's rising star Francesco Totti, with Parma's Enrico Chiesa as the only reserve.

Totti will not be short of familiar faces as Zoff has called up the entire Roma midfield Luigi Di Biagio, Eusebio di Francesco and Damiano Tomasi.

The midfield has become the weak link in the Italian team, a fact reflected in the number of foreign midfielders at top clubs Juventus, AC Milan and Inter Milan.

Spain will just be grateful to avoid defeat as they recover from a disastrous start to their Euro 2000 campaign a humiliating 3-2 upset against Cyprus semi professionals which hastened Clementes exit.

They came back to beat Russia 1-0 in a friendly and Israel 2-1 in a qualifier, and on Wednesday will again be looking to Real ace Raul.

But Camacho is without defender Fernando Hierro and midfielder Luis Enrique through injury and on Monday he lost Atletico Madrid midfielder Jordi Lardin whose father is undergoing heart surgery this week.

Camacho, who has been busy raising the rans in Mallorca and Celta Vigo to put together this weeks team, defended his selection.

"The reason why the squad has only one player each from Real Madrid and Barcelona is because they have so many foreigners in their teams," he said.

"There is hardly anyone for me to choose from."

Ravanelli out of action



PARIS, Nov 17 (Reuters/Internet): Marseille striker Fabrizio Ravanelli is out for ten days nursing a right foot injury, sport daily L'Equipe said on Tuesday.

Ravanelli who was to leave Marseille on Tuesday to spend several days with his family in Italy said he hoped to be fit to play Paris St Germain at the Stade Velodrome next week.

The Italian will miss the UEFA third round opening leg against Monaco next Tuesday.

Thailand getting ready to bid for Olympic Games



John McEnroe holds aloft the ATP Senior Tour of Champions' trophy. - AP/UNB photo

BANGKOK, Nov 17: Thailand has included equestrian events in the Asian Games to be held here next month in a bid to boost its chance of hosting a future Olympics, officials said today, reports AFP.

Seventeen countries are scheduled to compete in showjumping, cross-country horse racing and dressage events, organisers said in a statement.

The inclusion of events in the 13th Asian Games completes the Olympic format that would allow Thailand to bid as host country for future Olympic Games," it said.

Thailand is going all out for medals despite its inexperience, buying horses and training in Australia and employing English grooms.

"Anything can happen because this event depends on the venue, we bought our horses in Australia some time ago and they are already acclimatised to the Thai heat, so we expect to do well," said Thai team captain major Fuangvich Anrith-Deva.

The Thai team was formed two years ago and although inexperienced has been training in Australia, he said, adding Japan and South Korea were the current favourites for medals.

All equestrian events will be held at the Fort Adisorn Riding Club, 107 kilometers (66 miles) north of Bangkok, the venue has a capacity to seat 1000 spectators.

Thailand last week announced it may bid for the Olympics if the Asian Games between December 6-20 go smoothly.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer. Includes a crossword puzzle grid and a list of clues for across and down words. Also includes a cryptogram puzzle at the bottom right.