

Shield cricket

ADELAIDE, Dec 12 (Reuters/ Internet): Western Australia and South Australia won their Sheffield Shield matches by more than an innings each on Saturday, dominating with bat and ball.

Western Australia beat New South Wales by an innings and 16 runs on the bouncy WACA pitch. It took Western Australia just two days to win the match, with the Blues bowled out on Saturday for 204 in their second innings after making only 56 in their first innings -- their lowest ever Shield innings score.

Western Australia made 276 in their first innings. Their paceman Sean Cary claimed seven wickets for the match and former test fast bowler Brendon Julian finishing with six wickets.

In Hobart, South Australia crushed Tasmania by an innings and 140 runs at the Bellerive Oval. Tasmania were all out for 155 in their second innings before tea on the third day.

Mark Harris, Brett Swain and test batting discard Greg Blewett each took three wickets as Tasmania never looked like erasing their 295-run first-innings deficit.

South Australia earlier scored 475 for nine declared with Blewett renewing his claims for a test recall with 152, which took his shield average this season to 99.

For Tasmania only Michael di Venuto, who hit an aggressive 60, offered significant defiance.

At the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Queensland limped to 354 for nine declared, thanks to a rearguard action from all-rounder Geoff Foley with 97 and fast bowler Michael Kasprowicz with 52.

Victoria replied to be 111 for three at stumps on the second day with dropped Test opener Matthew Elliott holding the innings together on 66 not out.

Ramnarine recuperating

PORTE SPAIN, Dec 12 (Reuters/ Internet): Leg-spinner Dinanath Ramnarine, who was forced to return home early from West Indies' tour of South Africa because of injury, has had a successful shoulder operation in New York.

Ramnarine, ruled out of the tour before the five-Test series started on November 26, is expected back in the Caribbean on Friday, having been told by doctors he could return to action in three months.

Surgeons at the New York clinic indicated to the bowler the initial diagnosis in South Africa was incorrect and his injury was not as serious as first thought.

The injury was said to be a torn ligament, but the New York specialists said a rotator cuff was the cause of the problem.

Two-match ban on Charbonnier

PARIS, Dec 12 (Reuters/ Internet): Glasgow Rangers' goal-keeper Lionel Charbonnier has been suspended for two matches by the French Football Federation after walking out on the France squad preparing for an Euro 2000 qualifier in October.

Charbonnier will, however, see out the ban, which the Scottish FA have been told takes effect on Monday, long before he recovers from an injury. He may not play again this season.

"The suspension is merely an anecdote given his present situation and we hope he plays again as soon as possible," Noel Le Graet, president of the French league, said.

Charbonnier, who is currently recovering from his injury in France, has not commented on the suspension, the minimum ban by the FFF in such circumstances.



Former England captain Michael Atherton looks in despair after being caught in the slips while wicketkeeper Ian Healy and teammate Michael Slater confidently appeal. — AP/UNB photo

England weather setback

ADELAIDE, Dec 12 (Reuters/ Internet): England lodged a formal letter of complaint on Saturday over a controversial catch on the second day of the third Ashes Test.

While the visitors recovered from the loss of two wickets in the space of five balls to Australia's spin attack on a crumpling Adelaide Oval pitch, events were overshadowed by the controversial dismissal of England opener Michael Atherton.

England were 160 for three at the close after Nasser Hussain, 58 not out, and Mark Ramprakash, 45 not out, went on the attack and added 76 in the final 80 minutes of play.

England were chasing Australia's first innings total of 391.

The controversy erupted when former captain Atherton was given out caught by Australian captain Mark Taylor at slip for 41 off leg-spinner Stuart MacGill in the final session. Television replays appeared to show the ball bounced off either the ground or Taylor's fingers into his hand.

Taylor told on-field umpire Steve Bucknor he was not sure he had caught it and Bucknor then referred the matter to third umpire Paul Angley.

Angley adjudged Atherton out after viewing the main replay once, while repeated showings appeared to raise some doubt about the catch.

Miller finished the day with two for 48 but the biggest threat to England could well come from MacGill who was dangerous throughout the afternoon.

It was MacGill who almost won the first test for Australia in Brisbane, where he tormented the English on the final day and only a downpour that flooded the ground saved the visitors from defeat.

To bat: J Crawley, G Hick, D Headley, D Gough, A Mullally, P Such.

Bowler (to date) O M R W

Gough 29.5 4 103 3

Mullally 26 5 59 0

Headley 23 1 97 4

Such 38 8 99 3

Ramprakash 9 1 27 0

Fall of wkt: 1-28; 2-140; 3-156; 4-264; 5-274; 6-311; 7-338; 8-339; 9-354; 10-391.

Bowler O M R W

MacGill 13 2 41 0

Miller 13 1 48 2

MacGill 15 2 28 10

MacGill 3 0 17 0

Fall of wkt: 1-18; 2-83; 3-84.

To bat: J Crawley, G Hick, D Headley, D Gough, A Mullally, P Such.

Bowler (to date) O M R W

MacGill 13 2 41 0

Fleming 8 2 22 0

Miller 13 1 48 2

MacGill 15 2 28 10

MacGill 3 0 17 0

Fall of wkt: 1-69; 2-121; 3-129; 4-132; 5-147.

To bat: Wasim Akram, Saqlain Mushtaq, Waqar Younis, Shoaib Akhtar.

Bowler (to date) O M R W

Streak 21 6 53 1

Olanga 19 6 52 0

Mbanga 20 4 48 0

Johnson 19 2 45 2

Huckle 1 0 5 1

Fall of wkt: 1-69; 2-121; 3-129; 4-132; 5-147.

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Mbanga 20 4