

Hockey series Pakistan go 6-2 up

RAWALPINDI, Feb 22: Pakistan defeated arch-rivals India 8-7 in a thrilling sudden death penalty shootout after both teams were locked 3-3 in the regulation time in the eighth hockey Test of the nine-match series at Rawalpindi's Army Stadium Monday, reports AP.

The hosts thus took a 6-2 lead in the series with the last match scheduled to be played at Lahore Wednesday. Pakistan defeated India 3-1 in the Indian leg of four-match series and now have won three out of the four matches played in Pakistan.

Both teams were locked 3-3 in the regulation time and failed to find a golden goal in the extra 15 minutes of play.

Pakistan came back strongly late in the second half and scored twice as many minutes to go 3-2 up. However, Indian forward Gagan Ajit Singh scored the equaliser in the last minute and forced the match into extra time.

Indian forwards Kamal Horo and Ajit both failed to cash in on an ideal cross from Broj Singh in the first half of extra time as both Indian forwards missed the ball on the right flank. Pakistan enforced two short corner in the extra time but its penalty corner ace Sohail Abbas could not capitalise on it.

India enjoyed a 1-0 lead earlier in the first half of regulation period when Baljit Singh Dhillon netted the ball off his team's first short corner in the 25th minute.

Pakistan captain doctor Atif Bashir's slotted the equaliser in the 49th minute off a superb try from the top of the striking circle. However, a 59th minute penalty stroke was neatly converted by Dhillon when Horo's stick was checked inside the circle by Pakistan defender Mubashir Mukhtar.

Abbas then snatched the equalizer in the 66th minute and Mohammad Khalid led Pakistan 3-2 ahead in the next minute off a fine pass from Bashir. However, Ajit's fine attempt in the last minute from the right flank beat Pakistan in an Al "I'm w" brought both teams on level terms at the end of 70 minutes.

"It was the best match of the series. Although the turf was a bit slippery but both teams played well," said Indian coach Vasudevan Bhaskaran after the match.

Els turns things around

LOS ANGELES, Feb 22: All week, Ernie Els ranked Tiger Woods and David Duval the best players in the world. Then he went out and beat them and everybody else in the Nissan Open, reports AP.

Els shot his second consecutive 3-under-par 68 Sunday despite bogeying two of the last three holes. He held off Woods and Ted Tryba, both of whom bogeyed No 18, and Davis Love III to win by two strokes.

Els finished at 14-under-par 270 as swirling breezes off the Pacific kicked up in the afternoon to make for a ragged finish at the Riviera Country Club, which yielded a course-record 61 to Tryba a day earlier.

Els gave Woods and Tryba a chance to catch him when his 4-foot (1.2-metre) par putt slid past the cup on No 18. He then watched anxiously as the final group, Woods, Tryba and Love, finished.

Love parred the last hole, but Woods and Tryba, who needed birdies to force a playoff, settled for bogeys.

Woods, who won a week earlier at San Diego with scores of 62 and 65 on the last two days, frowned just after he hit his approach shot on 18; he realised he had just ruined any realistic chance to catch up by shanking the shot.

The ball sailed far to the right on the 451-yard (412-metre) par-4 hole, bounded into a concession stand and rolled under a chair.

He was given a drop, but still had a very long chip to the green and was forced to the hole on his putt from 25 feet (7.6 metres) away.

Tryba left his third shot, a chip from the rough, short of the hole on the way to his closing bogey.

Els began the day tied with Woods and Love, two shots behind Tryba.

There was no 59 this time from Duval, who had won two of his four 1999 starts, including a PGA record-closing round of 59 at the Bob Hope. But he did manage to stay close. After paring the first nine holes Sunday, he finally managed two birdies on the back for a 69 that left him just three shots behind Els.

Nick Price, with a 68, finished tied with Duval for fifth.

Els, a 29-year-old South African who splits his time between Orlando, where he owns a home, and his native country, plays a lot overseas, and 19 PGA Tour appearances in 1997 were his most ever.

Still, the Nissan win assured him a six-year run of victories on the Tour. He won once each year from 1994 to 1998.

Koyama dropped

TOKYO, Feb 22: Former Chinese world champion Chire Koyama has been dropped from the Japanese national team for the 45th World Championship to be held from April 26 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, reports AFP.

The Japanese Table Tennis Association, which announced 14 members for Belgrade Thursday, said it was a decision to "rejuvenate" the national team.

It was the first time that Koyama, now 34, was dropped from the national squad since she was naturalized as a Japanese citizen in 1992 and became the national champion for six straight years.

OPINION

No cricket in Eden, please

Syed Mahbub Murshed

Once again, the cricket test in Eden has proved that international cricket is unplayable in Calcutta. On two consecutive days, the spectators in the India-Pakistan test match created disturbances, hurled abuses, threw bottles and made the game almost unplayable just because India was about to be defeated its arch opponent, Pakistan. Surprisingly, even the Calcutta newspapers played a very unhelpful role, and in the view of many, incited the uniformed crowd, imbued with unwholesome chauvinistic nationalism.

Sachin Tendulkar was declared out by the umpire and rightly so. We all saw on the TV that running Sachin dashed against fielder Shoaib Akhbar, who was, with his back towards the approaching runner, poised at an appropriate place to hold the ball. It was the duty of the runner to see that he did not hit any fielder in position, and the umpire judged that Akhbar had no malafide intention. Why should the opponent suffer for Sachin's miscalculation or oversight? But what the crowd did or the sort of violent anger they displayed was in an cricket like utter distaste. The unruly crowd had to be flushed out of the stadium to ensure that the game could be played. And the Pakistanis, with ten balls, finished the Indians off.

As a matter of fact, the Pak-

istans should be given kudos for the way they played to the end under physical threat. That they at all came to India in spite of the communal approach taken by a section of Indians (hopefully small), and the threats given by Shiv Sena, an ally of the ruling BJP, is commendable. It helped to soften the tense political climate.

The coverage by Calcutta Press was incredible. Under the caption "Akram loses India but may win the Test," the Daily Telegraph suggested that Wasim Akram should have requested Sachin to play on and that would have saved the situation. Do the rules of cricket or for that matter, of any game, permit that? It is the umpire who would judge as to who should continue to play and who is out, and not the captain of the opposing team. What a ridiculous suggestion! Recognising that Akhbar had no way of seeing the approaching batsman, another correspondent "wisely" commented that fielders should never stand in such positions. It seems that it was an act of generosity on the part of the Press not to have suggested that Akhbar, Saqlain and Akram should not have bowed so well, and Anwar Sayeed should not have remained invincible throughout an innings.

Blinded by communalistic fervour, some newspapers even criticised Azharuddin's appear-

ing on a commercial display along with Wasim Akram with a smiling face. What a low mentality!

However, the redeeming feature of the Pakistani tour is that the government succeeded in providing adequate security to the players, the crowds in Chennai cheered the winning Pakistani side, and the law-enforcing authorities forced out the unruly spectators who had thronged the Eden Stadium. Perhaps such a shameful thing never occurred before. What happened in Calcutta perhaps constitutes the darkest episode in the history of cricket.

One cannot forget that Sir Garry Sobers ran for his life from Eden in 1967; on March 13, 1966, the same Calcutta crowd unashamedly disrupted the World Cup semifinal between Sri Lanka and India, when India faced a sure defeat. Even the crowd abused Sunil Gavaskar and his wife, for what they thought, not too — Indian a conduct.

Now that, there is a hope of good-will and amity being established in the subcontinent at the wake of Vajpayee-Sharif meeting, let cricket also play its contributing role. The proper response to what happened should be not to stage any international cricket in Calcutta for a few years till the crowd learns how to behave.

Dooley bids bye

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida, Feb 22 (Reuters/Internet): Thomas Dooley said goodbye to international soccer Sunday and was honored for nearly nine years of service to the U.S. national soccer team.

The 37-year-old defender led the U.S. squad onto the field for the final time as he gained his 81st cap and played all 90 minutes at central defender in a 2-1 victory over Chile in a friendly at Lockhart Stadium.

Before kickoff, Dooley was presented a plaque by U.S. Soccer President Dr. Robert Contiguglia and U.S. Soccer Chief Operating Officer Tom King.

Dooley captained the U.S. at France '98 where the Americans finished last in the field of 32 teams.

In 1992 Dooley moved to the United States from his native Germany where he did stints with Homburg, FC Kaiserslautern, Bayer Leverkusen and Schalke 04, where he finished his career in the Bundesliga in 1997 before joining his present club, the Columbus Crew of Major League Soccer.

Dooley, the son of a member of the U.S. Army, made his international debut as a defensive midfielder in 1992 in a 3-1 victory against the Republic of Ireland.

Dooley's first international goal stood as the game-winner in a 2-0 victory against England on June 9, 1993.

Dooley played in each of the U.S.'s matches in the 1994 and 98 World Cups.

In 1993, Dooley, who has scored seven times at international level, was honoured as U.S. soccer's male athlete of the year.

Dooley nearly found the back of the net when he headed wide to the left in the waning minutes.

"It would have been nice to score in my final game," Dooley said, "but what really matters is the team. The team won."

"I had scored, who knows, maybe I could keep player for a longer period of time," he joked. "It's been a great experience and I am going to miss playing with some of these young players coming up. But I'm not going anywhere, I'll be around."

Dooley, who captains Columbus, opens the 1999 Major League Soccer season on March 28.

Simone to leave PSG

PARIS, Feb 22 (Reuters/Internet): Experienced Italian striker Marco Simone, dejected by Paris St Germain's lacklustre performances, will leave the French capital next season.

"My decision is made. I have a contract and a clause in it," he told the sports daily L'Equipe in an interview published on Monday.

Simone, who clashed with coach Artur Jorge in training last week, joined PSG from AC Milan in 1997 for four years but will be free to leave the club at the end of the season for a 40 million francs (8 million dollars) fee.

"There is a lot of nervousness. Nobody's happy. On the pitch we can see that our performances are bad. We don't feel any pleasure playing," he said after PSG's home defeat by Nantes on penalties in the French Cup on Saturday.

"For Artur Jorge, with whom I had a dispute last week, it is a difficult situation to handle. We're all on the same boat."

Very critical of the team's training facilities and of the club's management, the 30-year-old Italian said PSG's chances of salvaging the season were dim.

"I don't know whether PSG can save their scalps. With a little bit of luck we might go all the way in the League Cup," he said.

But the main goal right now is to avoid relegation.

"It's always a mess at PSG because we're badly organised. It's everybody's fault if we are that low."

The Parisian club, who changed coach and president earlier this season, are way out of contention in the league, lying 11th in the 18-strong first division.

Salamanca managed to hang on for the rest of the game to win 1-0.

Deportivo looked to be on their way to victory in the Montjuic Olympic stadium against Espanyol after two goals in two minutes just after the break.

Espanyol closed the gap behind Barcelona after winning 3-1 at Oviedo, helped by a goal in each half from Dani Garcia.

Barcelona had 24 points while Celta remain third with 38 points, ahead on goal difference of fourth-placed Deportivo Coruna. All the teams have played 23 games.

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