

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 in 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 Brojn Singh in the first half of extra time as both Indian forwards missed the ball on the right flank. Pakistan enforced two short corners 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 50th 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.

Both teams were 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, bounced into the session 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 try his par 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 AP.

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 by its arch opponent, Pakistan. Surprisingly, even the Calcutta newspapers played a very unhelpful role, and in the view of many, incited the uninformed crowd, imbued with unwholesome chauvinistic nationalism.

Sachin Tendulkar was declared out by the umpire and rightly so. We all saw on the TV that Sachin dashed against fielder Shoaib Akhtar, 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 Akhtar had no malafide intention. Why should the opponent suffer for Sachin's miscalculation or over sight? But what the crowd did or the sort of violent anger they displayed was in un-cricketer like out 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-

istanis 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 Akhtar 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 Akhtar, Saqlain and Akram should not have bowled so well, and Anwar Sayeed should not have remained invincible throughout an innings.

Blinded by communalistic fervour, some newspapers even criticised Azharuddin's appearance 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, 1996, 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.



Kazakh Olga Shishigina (R), who won the 200-metre in an international athletics meeting in Lievii, France, poses with Slovak Brigita Bukovec on the podium on February 21. Brigita became second. —AFP photo

Celta Vigo hold Barcelona

MADRID, Feb 22 (Reuters/Internet): Barcelona had their lead at the top of the Spanish Primera Liga cut to three points after being held to a 0-0 draw at third-placed Celta Vigo on Sunday.

In a thrilling match in which both sides fought hard for the victory, Celta had the better chances.

Haim Revivo and Lubo Penev both went close on several occasions but were thwarted by some outstanding goalkeeping from Barcelona's Rudi Hesp.

Valery Karpin also had a shot tipped against the crossbar by Hesp late in the game.

Barcelona endured the last 19 minutes against Celta with only 10 men after their captain Luis Figo received his second yellow card for a handball.

The draw saw Barcelona drop their first points in the league this year, after eight consecutive victories.

"A draw was a fair result because, although we defended well, we did not reach our usual level in attack," Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal said.

Celta coach Victor Fernandez was left to regret the missed opportunities which could have seen his side turn one point into three.

"We played brilliantly and we did enough to win but the ball just did not want to go in

the net," Fernandez mused.

"However I have to be happy because we played Barcelona and worked hard in every area. Barcelona only had one good chance which was at the feet of Rivaldo. We did something defensively that few other teams have been able to do against Barcelona," Fernandez added.

Barcelona have 44 points, Mallorca lie second with 41 points while Celta remain third with 38 points, ahead on goal difference of fourth-placed Deportivo Coruna. All the teams have played 23 games.

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

Dani's first, a long-range shot after just 23 seconds, was the fastest goal of the season in the Spanish first division.

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.

Ivan Helguera blasted the ball home from outside the area three minutes before halftime to give the home side a 1-0 lead.

But, after 51 minutes, Fran Gonzalez shrugged off his marker Cristobal Parralo and beat Espanyol goalkeeper Toni Jimenez.

A minute later, Toni was picking the ball out of the net again after Turu Flores got his

ninth goal of the season.

However, a Martin Posse goal ten minutes from time ensured that Espanyol have now gone nine consecutive games without a loss.

In the basement of the first division, all the relegation-threatened teams except Tenerife won, thus consigning the Canary island to the foot of the Spanish first division.

Salamanca's decisive goal came after just nine minutes when Edu Alonso sent over a cross aimed for Carlos Casartelli. However Villarreal defender Oscar Tellez intercepted, only to turn it into his own net.

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

Valladolid fans had to wait until 10 minutes from time before Croatian international striker Alen Peternec caught the Valencia defence napping and headed home a Victor Fernandez cross for a 1-0 win.

Alaves went 1-0 down before two goals in the four minutes before halftime put them in the driving seat.

Former Italian international Nicola Berti added a third for Alaves two minutes into injury time to give the Basque club their best win of the season and leave Tenerife two points adrift at the bottom of the Spanish first division.

Lazio stretch their lead

ROME, Feb 22 (Reuters/Internet): Portuguese striker Sergio Conceicao gave Lazio a 1-0 victory over Inter Milan on Sunday that opened a two-point lead in the Italian Serie A as Fiorentina were held to a 0-0 home draw by AS Roma.

Lazio, seeking their first league title since their only previous success in 1974, are now on 45 points, ahead of Fiorentina and AC Milan on 43.

AC Milan beat Cagliari 1-0 at home but Parma are a further two points adrift after winning 2-1 at Salernitana.

Inter's defeat all but ends their title hopes as they are now 11 points off the pace in sixth place.

Conceicao's opportunistic effort in the 38th minute proved decisive for Lazio but both sides had plenty of chances.

Inter, who were beaten 2-0 at home by Parma in the Italian Cup on Wednesday and were without Brazilian striker Ronaldo, had the best of the second half and came close twice in the dying minutes through Roberto Baggio.

He hit the crossbar in the 85th minute and, on the stroke of time, Lazio keeper brilliantly Luca Marchegiani saved his volley.

"It's a shame. It was a beautiful game but we were very unlucky," Inter chairman Massimo Moratti said.

"Even without Ronaldo, the team created chances, which is encouraging for the future. But at this point we're out of the title hunt," he added.

Lazio nearly made it 2-0 in injury time, but Gianluca Pagliuca made his own great save from Chile's Marcelo Salas on the counter-attack.

"We played well, but above all we showed great character," said Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson.

Fiorentina badly missed injured striker Gabriel Batistuta in a disappointing clash with Roma.

Edmundo came close to breaking the deadlock for the hosts after 65 minutes when his cross shot missed by inches but generally there was little in the way of goalmouth action.

AC Milan kept pace with the

leaders despite at times being outplayed by a tough Cagliari side at the San Siro.

The goal was somewhat fortunate, coming when Cagliari defender Matteo Villa deflected an Oliver Bierhoff header into his goal in the 50th minute.

Cagliari, unlucky not to have scored after creating several chances, were gradually shut down after Milan brought on in-form Zvonimir Boban and French defender Bruno N'Gotty.

In the day's other key match, Parma could thank another vital goal from Croat Mario Stanic as they won 2-1 at Salernitana.

Parma took the lead with a goal from Italy defender Fabio Cannavaro just before the interval after Hernan Crespo had missed a penalty. Marco Di Vaio replied late on for the hosts.

Juventus won their second match in a row under new coach Carlo Ancelotti, 2-0 at home against Vicenza.

First half goals from Nicola Amoroso and captain Antonio Conte meant the champions stay 12 points adrift in seventh place.

Dooley bids bye

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida, Feb 22(Reuters/Inter-net): 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 Kaiserlautern, 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 won."

"If I had scored, who knows, maybe I could keep playing 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.

Porto regain top spot

LISBON, Feb 22: Champions Porto rebounded from a shock midweek Cup defeat to beat lowly Alverca 3-1 on Sunday and regain top spot in the Portuguese League, reports Reuters.

Boavista, 2-1 victors at northern neighbours Braga on Saturday, had taken over the top spot for 24 hours.

Porto, who were bundled out of the Cup by Second Division Torrense, took the lead after 24 minutes through veteran captain Jorge Costa.

Alverca equalised in the 32nd minute but Brazilian striker Mario Jardel made sure of victory for the home team with two penalties in the 55th and 86th minutes.

Benfica, also midweek losers in the Cup, bounced back with a 3-1 home win against Victoria Guimaraes to stay third, three points behind Porto and two adrift of Boavista. Porto, going for their fifth successive championship, have 52 points.

Guimaraes stunned the home crowd by taking the lead after 15 minutes but club captain Joao Vieira Pinto equalised with a header 12 minutes later.

England's Michael Thomas put Benfica in front after 67 minutes when he fired home from close range.

Although Guimaraes remained dangerous, striker Nuno Gomes completed Benfica's win two minutes from time.



Chile's Reinaldo Navia (No 19) tries to tackle Carlos Llamasa of the United States during a friendly soccer match in Lauderdale, Florida on February 21. The hosts won 2-1. —AFP photo

United States edge Chile

FORT LAUDERDALE, Florida, Feb 22(Reuters/Internet): The United States scored twice in seven minutes to defeat Chile, 2-1, in an international soccer friendly Sunday.

With both sides starting essentially B team players, most of the hard-hitting match, that featured 60 fouls and six bookings, was played at a breakneck pace before the announced crowd of 14,896.

After a scoreless first half with Chile, which advanced to the second round of the World Cup, controlling much of the play, the U.S. broke the deadlock in the 58th minute through Ben Olsen.

Brian McBride stripped the ball from Chilean defender Francisco Rojas near the right sideline and put a low cross into the D.C. United midfielder who deftly tucked the ball to the left side of the net from 13 metres.

It was the 21-year-old's first international goal.

Chile equalized six minutes later through Roberto Cortes who blasted a 30-foot shot to the upper right corner of the U.S. net giving goalkeeper Tom Prestus no chance. The goal marked the first the U.S. had conceded since the World Cup.

The Americans snatched the game-winner a minute later.

Thomas Dooley, appearing in his final international, knocked a free kick to McBride on the right side, McBride centered to Eddie Lewis inside the Chilean area where he settled the ball and hit a low shot right at defender Pablo Contreras from 13 metres.

The Colo Colo defender, appearing in only his second full international for Chile, missed the ball which went off his right foot into the Chile goal.

"I've probably had a thousand dreams about what my first international goal would be like," said Lewis, "but I never thought it would be like that. I just wanted to get a good frame on the shot and put it on target."

The victory extended the U.S.'s post-World Cup unbeaten run to four matches and came only 15 days after its shock upset of Germany.

"We're certainly pleased with the game," said U.S. coach Bruce Arena, "and very happy for Thomas Dooley. We took a little while to get settled in the first half, but I think in the second half we were more comfortable and out of top of them (Chile) a little more."

"It also gave us a chance to get some young players some time. Hats off to Chile, they have some very good players."

Chile started six players from its France '98 roster while the U.S. fielded only three.

"We came to this game looking at the younger players," Chile coach Nelson Acosta Lopez said. "We missed Marcelo (Salas) and Ivan (Zamorano), but we still have the future (team) of what we brought here."

Lazio's Salas and Inter Milan's Zamorano remained in Europe due to club commitments.

IOC's tough time ahead

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colorado, Feb 22 (AP): A top official of the US Olympic Committee questions whether the IOC and its embattled leader can deal with the worst scandal in the history of the Games.

USOC executive director Dick Schultz said the International Olympic Committee may be unable to reform its clubby system when it meets next month.

"It's a wait-and-see thing," Schultz said, when asked if he had faith the IOC could repair the unprecedented problems that threaten the fate of the Games and the multimillion-dollar empire they have created.

An ethics report on the bribery scandal surrounding Salt Lake City's successful quest for the 2002 Winter Games identified 24 IOC members — a fifth of the membership — who benefited from 1.2 million dollars in cash, travel, medical care and other improper inducements from Utah bidders.

Nine members have resigned or been expelled. The IOC will hold a special session in Lausanne, Switzerland, March 17, 18 to endorse the expulsions and consider reforms.

Those under investigation include one of the most powerful leaders of international sports — Kim Un-yong, an IOC executive board member from South Korea and president of the international confederation of Olympic sports bodies.

"It's going to be interesting to see if they will be able to expel the people that, according to the information they have, they ought to expel," Schultz said.

"It's going to be an interesting meeting."

While the IOC may not "fall apart" at the March session, Schultz added, "I don't think

they will get all they are trying to accomplish."

The members also will be asked to give a vote of confidence to Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC president who has been the target of increasing calls to resign.

Most of those calls have come from outside the Olympic community, although international sponsors of the IOC — most of them American based — have complained that not enough is being done to clean up the mess that tarnishes their 50 million dollar investments in the Olympic rings.

Schultz, who has maintained close ties with Samaranch since taking over at the USOC in 1995, has not asked for the 78-year-old Spaniard to step down.

But, in what has become a growing trend within the IOC's most important national subsidiary, he failed to give Samaranch a full endorsement.

Asked if it would be in the USOC's best interest if Samaranch were replaced, Schultz replied: "That depends who replaced him."

"Our hope is that Samaranch can continue until they get some of these new things in place," Schultz said. Samaranch's term expires in 2001.

The IOC's executive board last month recommended changes in the way Olympic host cities are picked, most notably taking the vote from the rank-and-file and giving it to a 15-member commission. That proposal has been sharply criticised by members, who say they would be punished for the corruption of others and stripped of one of their few meaningful duties.

Schultz, speaking at the end of a weekend USOC executive committee meeting, said he understood that IOC leaders were preparing a longer list of recommendations to be presented

at the March session and afterward. He did not have details.

Anita DeFrantz, an IOC vice president and a USOC executive committee member, was travelling Sunday and unavailable for comment.

The USOC leadership was briefed by former Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, whose independent ethics commission report on the Salt Lake scandal is to be released March 1.

Mitchell said Saturday the report will be completed this week but said its focus is on preventing other scandals as US cities bid for the Olympics in 2012 and beyond.

"The emphasis will be on recommendations for rules, compliance and enforcement, which we hope, if adopted, will prevent the occurrences that led to the creation of the commission," he said.

At its meeting, the USOC leadership took the next step toward an independent drug-testing agency. The USOC has been criticised for being the only national Olympic committee that runs drug tests for its own athletes.

It passed a resolution endorsing the new programme and said it hoped to have the matter ready for a vote at the USOC board of directors' meeting in New Orleans on April 10-11.

Schultz said major work still had to be done, including a decision on whether to hire an outside company or create a new one to do the tests. He said he had talked with the NFL and the NCAA about setting up a joint drug-testing office.

The executive committee also appointed Olympic track champion Jackie Joyner-Kersey as a special assistant to president Bill Hybl. The position generally involves work on task forces and other projects.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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