

Green Delta hockey  
Abahani beat  
Sudharan Bima

Sports Reporter

Two goals in either half propelled aspirants Abahani to a 2-0 win over Sudharan Bima Kira Sangsta in their Green Delta Premier Division hockey league opener at the Moulana Bhasani Stadium yesterday afternoon.

In a dull and boring encounter, Abahani dominated the entire proceedings but failed to score more than twice because of poor performance by the forwards, defender Mamun Rashid struck the first goal from a short corner at the stroke of the breather while midfielder Mahboob Harun sealed the match converting another short corner in the 68th minute.

Yellow cards: Giasuddin Rubel (Abahani) and Hasan (S Bima)

## TODAY'S MATCH

Green Delta Insurance Premier Division Hockey League  
Mariner Young's Club v Ajax SC (3:30 pm)

Harkness  
on sale

LIVERPOOL, England, Mar 9 (Reuters/ Internet): Liverpool will sell defender Steve Harkness to Benfica providing they can be sure the 1.21 million US dollar fee will be paid, club sources said on Tuesday.

The 27-year-old travelled to Portugal on Tuesday to discuss a move to the club now coached by former Liverpool player and manager Graeme Souness.

But Liverpool are taking steps to make sure they are not caught up in Benfica's financial problems.

# Complacency at the core of Caribbean downfall

LONDON, Mar 9 (Reuters/ Internet): Complacency and lack of investment during the great years laid the seeds of West Indies' calamitous fall from grace at Port-of-Spain on Monday.

West Indies, who ruled the cricketing world from 1980 to 1995, were dismissed for 51 in their second innings in the first Test against Australia, their lowest total in Test cricket.

It was their sixth Test loss in a row after a 5-0 defeat by South Africa and the prospects for the remainder of the four-Test series against Australia look bleak.

A players' strike before the South African tour, headed by captain Brian Lara and his deputy Carl Hooper, revealed the open divisions between the team and the West Indies Cricket Board (WICB).

Once in South Africa, Lara's slippish approach to both the captaincy and his batting betrayed the arrogance developed by leading West Indies players over the years.

Finally, the results in South Africa showed the stream of talent in the Caribbean has dried up, at least temporarily, partly through the counter-attractions of U.S. sport and partly through the failure of the WICB to invest at the grassroots level.

The despair on the faces of the spectators in Port-of-Spain on Monday as they watched Glenn McGrath and Jason Gillespie scythe through the feeble West Indies batting was eloquent testament to the grip cricket retains in the

Caribbean.

There are no more passionate or knowledgeable cricket watchers in the world and despite the predictably optimistic post-match soundbites from Lara they know their team are unlikely to match let alone de-

feat South Africa.

But, in the absence of Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Hooper, he was the only batsman likely to surmount for long the vagaries of the pitch and the skill of the four-pronged Australian attack.

"I think that it is important for myself and West Indies cricket that I try my best to solve my batting problems and see how best I can go out and get similar scores like I used to four years ago," Lara said.

The problems with the bowling are less widespread but the West Indies attack is still carried by the ageing warriors Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose, the only pair in the side to show consistently the impersonal pride which distinguished their side's play during the 1980s.

Lara, himself, is on probation as captain and his position will be reviewed after the first two Tests, although a likely replacement is not immediately apparent.

Tony Cozier, the respected Barbadian commentator and writer, said the positions of manager Clive Lloyd and coach Malcolm Marshall were also in jeopardy.

This is their sixth successive defeat and in any other international sport the coach and manager would feel compelled to hand in their resignations," he said.

Cozier also criticised the West Indies Cricket Board decision to put Lara on probation.

"Either he was their man or he wasn't," Cozier said. "If they were going to replace him they should have bitten the bullet."

BRIAN LARA

feat the upbeat Australians.

"All in all I think the team is going to gain something positive out of this, which is most important," Lara said.

"We can't dwell too much on negatives. We are one-nil down.

"I know it is easier said than done but if we get 300-350 on the board we are going to be competitive because the bowlers seem to be able to do their job."

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