

Rain hampers WA progress

BRISBANE, Mar 20: Former Test batsman Damien Martyn led a Western Australia light-back before rain interrupted day two of the Sheffield Shield cricket final against Queensland on Saturday, reports AP.

Martyn reached 70 and Simon Katich was 54 as WA made 147 for two in reply to Queensland's 265.

With WA needing to win the match to claim the Shield and Queensland only requiring a draw, it was a frustrating afternoon for the visitors at the Gabba.

Rain washed out the two sessions after lunch but WA still has time to force a result in the five-day game, with extra time added on the cover for the loss of play.

"There's still a lot of cricket to be played and with these extended days now they are quite deceptive," WA skipper Tom Moody said.

"We are in no rush or panic over the time lost today, we just need to build on an excellent partnership."

Marylebone's historic 10

LONDON, Mar 20 (AP): The Lord's-based Marylebone Cricket Club, a bastion of male exclusivity for 212 years, last week announced its first 10 honorary female members.

Former England women's captain Rachael Heyhoe Flint, an active campaigner for the inclusion of women to the MCC since 1991, was on the ground-breaking list made public on March 16.

Heyhoe Flint, who won 45 caps for England between 1960 and 1979, was aware she was making cricket history.

"I might be referred to as the catalyst, who in 1991 had the temerity to apply to become a member," she said.

The world's oldest cricket club, which until 30 years ago was the governing body for the sport, voted in favour of admitting women in a ballot of members in September last year.

An original ballot in February last year failed to win a two-

from lobby groups and the government forced a second vote, where a 70 per cent majority overturned the rule.

Not only had women been barred from membership, but with the exception of Queen Elizabeth II — the club's official patron — women also were not allowed to enter the club's pavilion during play.

Eight of the women attended the inauguration at the MCC's famous Long Room, where MCC president Tony Lewis said the club needed the experience of the women "as the culture of this great club changes."

"I can assure our 10 ladies that they have not been pawns in the popular game of social for political correctness," he said.

"The unanimous thinking of the committee was simply this... we could not claim to be a great cricket club unless we had a women's team and women members. A simple equation."

The first MCC women's team will play at Surrey on May 11. The nine other women on the list all contributed to the development of women's cricket in England.

Betty Archdale, was a former England captain and tourist Edna Barker played for England over 12 years.

Audrey Collins has had a 40-year association with the game and was president of the Women's Cricket Association for 12 years.

Carole Cornthwaite won 65 caps for England from 1985-93. Jackie Court played 40 matches for England.

Sheila Hill played for Oxford University and umpired the first Women's World Cup final between England and Australia at Edgbaston.

Norma Izard was a former president of the WCA and is the longest serving manager after managing 12 international before resigning in 1993.

Diana Rait Kerr was curator of the MCC museum from 1945-68 and Neeta Rheinberg was secretary of the WCA for 11 years and was editor of the WCA magazine.

U-19 cricket

FARIDPUR, Mar 20: Faridpur became regional champions in the 19th under-19 national cricket tournament defeating Rajbari by seven wickets at the local stadium today, reports UNB.

Set to score 63 runs to win the match, the hosts easily reached their target losing three wickets on the final day of the three-day match.

Earlier, Rajbari were shot out 47 in their first innings and 176 in the second innings.

Faridpur made scored 160 in their first innings.

Ronaldo not going to Sampdoria

MILAN, Mar 20: Ronaldo will not play in Inter Milan's league match at Sampdoria on Sunday, Inter coach Mircea Lucescu said on Friday, reports Reuters.

Ronaldo had said he wanted to play but Lucescu decided to rest the former world footballer of the year after consulting Inter officials. Ronaldo has been dogged by injuries to both knees all season.

Lucescu gambled in playing Ronaldo in Wednesday's European Champion's Cup quarter-final second leg against Manchester United.

But the move failed to pay dividends. Ronaldo looked a long way short of match fitness and was substituted after an hour without having troubled the United defence.

The 22-year-old Brazilian has played only six full matches all year. Wednesday's match marked only his third appearance since January 17.

Shane says he's okay



ST JOHN'S, Antigua, Mar 20: Shane Warne has played down concerns about his bowling expressed by his long-time coach Terry Jenner, reports Reuters.

The Australian leg-spinner has taken just three wickets costing almost 80 runs apiece in the three Test he has played since returning from serious shoulder surgery.

Speaking in Australia, Jenner suggested Warne's form had been so modest that fellow wrist-spinner MacGill and off-spinner Colin Miller might be better choices for the third Test against West Indies starting in Bridgetown, Barbados, on March 27.

"I think it's fairly obvious that he's struggling," Jenner said. "A bowler has to have wickets against his name or he starts to question and he starts to say 'why?' and he says 'gee, I'm down on my luck'."

Asked if MacGill and Miller would be the best combination, Jenner, who is bringing an Australian supporters' tour party to Barbados and Antigua for the last two Tests, replied: "I can't see why you wouldn't do that."

In the same three Tests that Warne has played since his comeback, one against England and two in West Indies, MacGill has taken 18 wickets at less than 13 runs each.

Despite the figures Warne believes he is bowling well. "I created a few little half chances in the last game (second Test) but it just wasn't to be," he said.

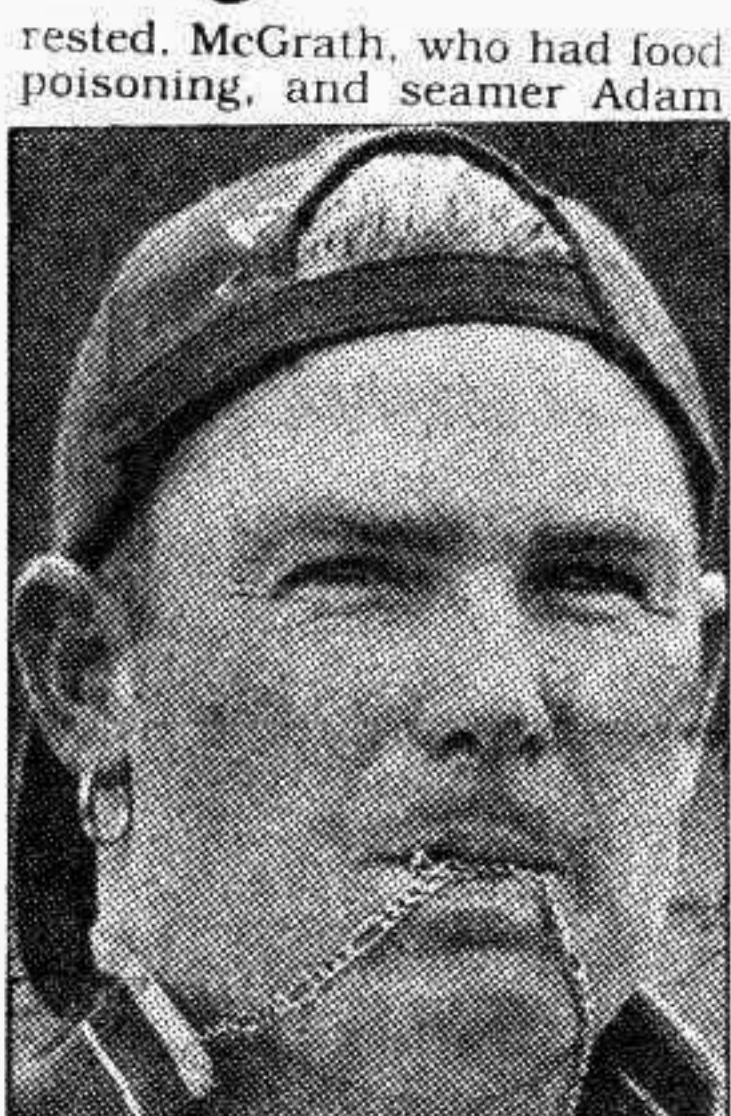
Coach Geoff Marsh said Warne was trying too hard. "He's just back from injury and he's bowling okay but he hasn't looked as dangerous as normal," said Marsh.

"He's competing instead of just being Shane Warne and relaxing, getting set in his action and getting energy through the crease. He's working very hard in the nets."

"He's a world-class bowler. Look at his career, he's got an outstanding record. It comes back to a confidence thing just as it does in batting."

Warne and MacGill will both play in the four-day match against West Indies A team, starting in St John's today, the Australians' only fixture between the first two Tests and the last two of the series.

Fast bowlers Glenn McGrath and Jason Gillespie will be



SHANE WARNE

Dale, who was suffering from a virus, did not train on Friday.

WICB keeps faith in Lara



ST JOHN'S, Antigua, Mar 20 (Reuters/AP): Brian Lara is to lead West Indies in the last two Tests against Australia and the one-day series that follows, having been on probation as captain for the first two Tests.

"The board has no hesitation in endorsing the selection committee's recommendation, which followed a positive appraisal of Lara's leadership in the first and second Tests matches," the board said in a press release.

Lara's magnificent 213 in the second Test in Jamaica on Sunday was largely responsible for his team's series-tying 10-wicket victory. That victory brought an end to the West Indies' worst-ever run of form in which they lost six consecutive matches in the 5-0 humiliation in South Africa and the opening Test defeat to Australia in Trinidad.

Lara was originally chosen to lead the team for the first two Tests on a probationary basis, with certain targets set by the Board. Now, the 29-year-old superstar has been given a vote of confidence and the job for the

remaining two tests and seven one-day internationals.

Chairman of selectors Mike Findlay said the appraisal team and selection committee were very satisfied that Lara had shown "marked improvement in his relationship with the management and members of the team both on and off the field."

He added that "there was much greater consultation between himself, the management and the players, and that there was evidence that he was doing more to inspire the team."

The third Test starts in Bridgetown on March 27. Lara's appointment for the rest of the series came after it was announced he would be unable to play for Trinidad and Tobago against Barbados in the final of the Busta Cup first-class competition starting in Bridgetown on Saturday.

The in-form Windies captain, will miss the final on his doctor's advice. The left-hander will rest his right wrist, which he injured during the one-day internationals of the South African tour.

The WICB said that his absence is to ensure he will be fully fit for the third Test.

Leverkusen go second

BONN, Mar 20(Reuters/Internet): A 1-1 home draw against lowly Schalke 04 sent Bayer Leverkusen into second place in the German first division on Friday.

Stefan Beinlich put Leverkusen ahead from a free kick in the 36th minute but Youri Mulder headed the visitors level 11 minutes into the second half.

Champions Kaiserslautern will recapture second spot if they manage at least a draw at VfL Bochum on Saturday.

VfL Wolfsburg and Borussia Dortmund drew 0-0.

Dortmund came close to scoring in the 11th minute when midfielder Andreas Moeller hit the bar.

Wolfsburg were reduced to 10 men in the 73rd minute when striker Roy Prager was sent off after a bad tackle on defender Juergen Kohler.

Runaway leaders Bayern Munich play Werder Bremen at home on Saturday.

Thorpe misses world record

BRISBANE, Mar 20(Reuters/Internet): Sydney teenager Ian Thorpe swam the second fastest time in history to win the men's 400 metres freestyle title at the Australian championships on Saturday.

Thorpe, 16, stopped the clock at three minutes 43.85 seconds to miss Kieren Perkins world record by five-hundredths of a second.

"Swimming beside Thorpe tonight was like swimming in the surf," said Daniel Kowalski, a former Olympic and world championship silver medalist who finished third.

Thorpe, winner of the 400 metres title at last year's world championships in Perth, was in brilliant form. He qualified fastest for the final and kept pace with 1,500 metres world champion Grant Hackett for most of the race before accelerating away in the last 125 metres.

Hackett finished second in 3:45.59 with Kowalski third in 3:48.86 and Perkins a distant fourth in 3:53.86.

Thorpe's performance has raised the prospect of him launching another assault on Italian Giorgio Lamberti's 200 metres world record of 1:46.69 which has stood since 1989.

Thorpe came within one-hundredth of a second of that record at last year's Commonwealth Games and is hoping to go quicker when he tackles the event on Monday.

"I think my 200 metres will be pretty strong," Thorpe said. "Hopefully, it will be faster than the Commonwealth Games."

The eight-day Australian championships are doubling as the trials for this year's Pan Pacific championships at the Sydney Olympic pool.

The meeting is also the first major championship to use the new semifinals system which has been reintroduced for the Sydney Games.

No Zidane for three weeks

MILAN, Mar 20: France's Zinedine Zidane has twisted his knee and could miss his country's next two Euro 2000 qualifying matches and Juventus' European Champions' League semi-final first-leg against Manchester United, the Gazzetta dello Sport reported today, says AFP.

The world footballer-of-the-year was injured in his club's European Champions' League match against Olympiakos on Wednesday.

He is expected to be out of action for nearly three weeks, team doctor Riccardo Agricola told the newspaper.

France's national team doctor will also examine Zidane before officially ruling him out of his country's Euro 2000 qualifiers against Ukraine on March 27 and against Armenia on March 31.

He could also be out of Juventus' match against Manchester United at Old Trafford on April 7 and the league matches against Roma on Sunday and against Empoli on April 3.



Borussia Dortmund's Leonardo Dede (R) faces a sliding tackle from Frank Greiner of VfL Wolfsburg during their Bundesliga encounter at Wolfsburg on March 19. — AFP photo

Redondo returns to national fold



BUENOS AIRES, Mar 20: Fernando Redondo's near-five years wait for an Argentina recall ended on Friday, reports Reuters.

The Real Madrid midfielder, troubled by a knee injury this season, was included in the squad for an away friend against the Netherlands — Argentina's World Cup conquerors — at the end of the month.

If Redondo plays, it will be his first appearance since the 1994 World Cup.

He refused to play under tough disciplinarian Daniel Passarella, coach from 1994 until last year. First he ignored demands to have his hair cut and then said he could not play in the position Passarella wanted him for.

Passarella's successor Marcelo Bielsa also included Fiorentina striker Gabriel Batistuta.

But he overlooked Boca Junior Striker Martin Palermo, who scored 20 goals in 19 games in last year's Apertura championship and has started this

year's Clausura with goals in each of the first two matches.

Six uncapped players were named — goalkeeper Albano Bizarri, defenders Mauricio

Argentina have won both their matches under Bielsa, 2-0 away to Venezuela and 1-0 against Mexico in Los Angeles.

SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Albano Bizarri (Real Madrid), Carlos Roa (Mallorca).

DEFENDERS: Roberto Ayala (AC Milan), Gustavo Lombardi (River Plate), Mauricio Pellegrino (Barcelona), Mauricio Pinedo, Gustavo Siviero (both Mallorca), Mauricio Pochettino (Espanyol), Robert Sensi (Parma), Nelson Vivas (Arsenal), Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan).

MIDFIELDERS: Andres Guglielminetto (AC Milan), Giego Cagna (Boca Juniors), Fernando Redondo (Real Madrid), Federico Lussenhoff (Tennerife), Nicolas Medina (Argentinos Juniors), Juan Sebastian Veron (Parma), Cristian Gonzalez (Real Zaragoza).

FORWARDS: Ariel Ortega (Sampdoria), Gabriel Batistuta (Fiorentina) Hernan Crespo (Parma), Gustavo Lopez (Real Zaragoza), Claudio Lopez (Valencia).

BATTISTUTA

Pochettino and Gustavo Siviero and midfielders Andres Guglielminetto, Federico Lussenhoff and Nicolas Medina.

King denies influencing Holyfield-Lewis fight



NEW YORK, Mar 20 (AP/Internet): Boxing promoter Don King testified on Thursday that he did not influence the outcome of the Holyfield-Lewis world heavyweight boxing title fight that ended in a controversial draw.

King, called before a New York State Senate committee probing the bout and examining possible changes in the way boxing is run, said he felt unfairly blamed for the uproar over Saturday night's fight. The combined scores of the judges ruled it a draw, but many expert observers believe British boxer Lennox Lewis defeated American Evander Holyfield.

"The main thing is that I have nothing to do with the selection of judges or the outcome of the event," King said under questioning from state senator Roy Goodman about the way boxing title fights are organized and promoted.

The judges for the bout at Madison Square Garden in New York were appointed by the sports three governing bodies: the World Boxing Association (WBA), the World Boxing Council (WBC) and the International Boxing Federation (IBF). The

bodies paid the judges a standard fee of 5,150 dollars each but expenses such as hotel bills and meals were paid by King, as is the custom for such events.

"If any other promoter was promoting that fight you would not have the hue and cry and outrage that you are now seeing here in judgment on today," King told the New York State Senate Committee on Investigations, Taxation and Government Operations chaired by Goodman.

"Perception is reality. If you look at the perception, I'm to blame for the Johnstown flood, World War II, for the San Francisco fire. Anything that they can find in the world to blame they get me," said King, considered the most colorful character in boxing for his outspoken manner and money-spinning astuteness in organizing big fights.

The Holyfield-Lewis fight, instead of producing an undisputed heavyweight world champion, has plunged the boxing world into crisis, with some experts questioning whether the judging might have been rigged or was simply incompetent.

Judge Stanley Christoudoulou of South Africa scored

the fight 116-113 points in favor of WBC champion Lewis. American Eugenia Williams had Holyfield winning 115-113. Judge Larry O'Connell of Britain scored it a draw at 115-115.

Holyfield retained his WBA and IBF titles and Lewis kept his WBC crown. The fighters took home combined purses of 30 million dollars.

Goodman's committee drew up a list of 20 issues to be discussed with 12 witnesses. He said it wanted to "determine if malignancy existed at the title fight and consider reforms to clean up the boxing game and to assure that both the perception and reality of legitimacy are accurate."

In her testimony on Thursday, boxing judge Williams answered "absolutely not" to a question from Goodman about whether she was influenced by anything that had nothing to do with the fight.

Shown a videotape of the 5th round in which she was the only judge to declare Holyfield the winner, Williams said, "What I saw on TV is not the same as what I saw that night. I can only go by what I looked at that night and I scored that accordingly."

NBA round-up

36 shots for Iverson

PHILADELPHIA, Mar 20 (AP/Internet): The 76ers put to rest any lingering talk that they can't win when Allen Iverson scores 40 or more points.

Iverson put on a dominant offensive display Friday night, attempting a career-high 36 shots, scoring 41 points and putting some distance between himself and Shaquille O'Neal in the scoring race as the 76ers trounced the Lakers 105-90.

"Monkey off my back!" Iverson shouted in the locker room, well aware Philadelphia had been 0-7 when he eclipsed the 40-point mark.

Iverson embarrassed everyone the Lakers used as a defender — especially Kobe Bryant — in front of the 76ers' first sellout crowd of the season. He shot 17-for-36 from the field and 4-for-6 from the line, handed off 10 assists and grabbed five rebounds while finding his shot within the rhythm of the offense and surviving three hard collisions with O'Neal and one with Travis Knight.

"He can't guard me out on the perimeter, there's no way," Iverson said of Bryant. "Kobe is 6-foot-5, 6-6, and I'm 6 feet tall. So I got the mismatch — especially if I hit a jumper and he has to get up close on me. He was grabbing me, holding me and getting away with it, but it all paid off."

O'Neal scored 23 for Los Angeles and Bryant also had 23 when he wasn't being made to look foolish by trying to keep

up with the speedy Iverson. About the only time Bryant contained Iverson came as the clock ticked inside the final minute. After failing to shake Bryant with a pick or fancy footwork, Iverson found Eric Snow open for a jumper, giving him his 10th assist and putting the Sixers ahead 102-90.

"That's it, I take the blame. It won't happen again. I really wasn't prepared for that. I was in a foreign land."

"I don't really look at this as a me and Allen matchup," Bryant said.

Three years down the line, four years down the line, if we keep going head-to-head, then that will be the equivalent of having a duel-type matchup. Right now, it's just a preview."

Iverson increased his league-leading average from 28.6 to 29.2, while O'Neal's dropped from 27.2 to 27.0.

George Lynch added 13 points, Theo Ratliff had 12, Tyrone Hill had 11 points and 10 rebounds and Snow had 10 points, six steal and five assists.

The 76ers outrebounded the Lakers, who were without Dennis Rodman for the fourth straight game, 46-34.

"They're a good team, for the West Coast," Iverson said. "I think they need Rodman. I could see a lot of chaos out there within their team. I didn't really know before, but playing against them you can find out some things by listening and

seeing what's going on."

O'Neal grabbed only four rebounds before fouling out with 1:25 left.

"He's an obvious factor," O'Neal said of Rodman. "But he had personal problems, whatever that means. Nobody really knows."

After taking 21 shots in the first half and making nine, Iverson showed no signs of slowing down in the third quarter.

Shot No. 25 was a corner jumper that gave Philadelphia a 62-58 lead, shot No. 26 was a 3-pointer that upped the lead to seven, shot No. 28 was a jumper after Iverson lost Bryant with a tricky behind-the-back dribble out near the 3-point line, and shot No. 30 came with 1.8 seconds left in the quarter, a floater over 7-footer Sean Rooks that gave Iverson 31 points and put Philadelphia ahead 76-67.

Iverson tied his career-high of 32 shots with 10:17 left in the fourth quarter on a 3-pointer that gave the 76ers an 83-72 lead, and Los Angeles never made a final run.

Iverson reached 40 points with 3:38 left, breaking free of Bryant's grip on his jersey and hitting a jumper that made it 94-82.

"The little kid was phenomenal," Sixers coach Larry Brown said. "At one point I had to take him out he was so wired. He took a lot of shots, but he had good selection on most of them."



Action from the NBA game between the Philadelphia 76ers and the Los Angeles Lakers in Philadelphia on March 19. — AFP photo