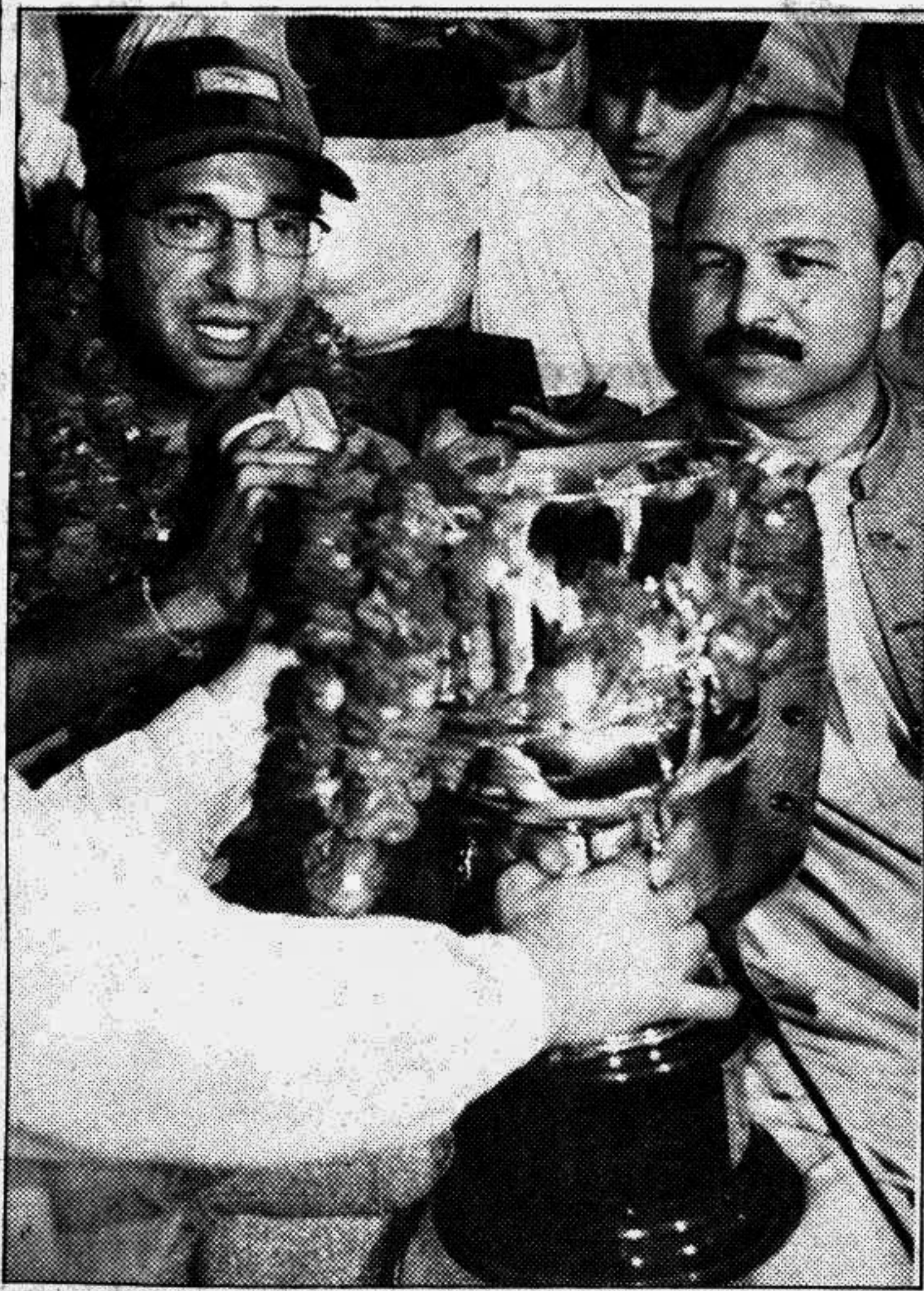


Sport

European soccer scene

Sachin can't wait for WC

NEW DELHI, Apr 19: Batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar today said his back had completely healed and that he was looking forward to playing in the World Cup next month, reports PTI.



Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram (L), flanked by Information Minister Mushahid Hussain, speaks to newsmen on arrival at Lahore Airport on April 18. — AFP photo

Bacher wants Woolmer to go slow

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 19 (Reuters/Internet): South Africa cricket chief Ali Bacher said on Monday he would not be happy if Bob Woolmer took over as England's coach immediately after the World Cup.

Former England batsman Woolmer, who is stepping down after five successful years as South Africa's coach, confirmed over the weekend that an England Cricket Board official had flown to South Africa to speak to him.

"We spoke for several hours last week. He wanted to know the extent of my interest," said Woolmer.

"I told him that I had several offers to consider but that I wasn't making any decisions until after the World Cup. I owe that to myself, my team and the South African public."

Current England coach David Lloyd is quitting after the World Cup which begins next month.

Bacher, managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, said: "There is nothing we can do to stop Bob (coaching England), although we wouldn't like to see him coaching there so soon after he was involved with the South African side."

"(South African captain) Hansie Cronje told me that he wouldn't be happy because Bob knows the players so well and the team secrets intimately. He can identify weak areas of their game."

The Board suggested that in future we would like to get a restraint against coaches who have been in charge of the national side to prevent them immediately moving into a coaching position of another country," Bacher said.

SA serious about WC

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 19 (Reuters/Internet): South Africa have barred a top coach from joining Pakistan's World Cup squad because of fears he may disclose playing secrets to their rivals.

English-born Richard Pybus, who coached Border to both the first-class and limited overs provincial finals this season, was appointed on Thursday as Pakistan's technical coach and fitness trainer for the World Cup.

However, United Cricket Board managing director Ali Bacher vetoed the arrangement after a board meeting at the weekend.

"Richard works in South Africa for six months of the year and he knows all our secrets and methods," Bacher said. "It would be entirely unacceptable to have him in an opposing camp at the World Cup."

A disappointed Pybus said: "I didn't think there were any secrets in international cricket these days, and besides I am too far removed from the national set-up to know what those secrets might be."

BRIEF SCORES

INDIA-99 ELEVEN: 292 for 4 (S Tendulkar 115 not out, S Ramesh 78)

INDIA-83 ELEVEN: 204 all out in 33.3 overs (K Srikanth 45, Dilip Vengsakar 44, Madanlal 39; Tendulkar 2 for 37, Dridav 2 for 60)

OPINION

Miracle on the ice

Nasrullah Khaled

A food for thought, for the boys. Let's start the piece with a little retrospective from the glorious past of the American sporting world. The year is 1980; the place is Lake Placid, New York and the extravaganza is Winter Olympics. It was almost twenty years since USA won a gold in ice hockey. The last time they won was in 1960.

So, naturally every sports loving fan in the USA was hoping maybe this was the year when their home team will do something great to snatch the gold from the mighty Canadians, or the Russians (then USSR).

To make their dream come true they started their preparation a little bit earlier than usual.

They hired a great coach named Herb Brooks, gave the players all modern facilities and the gadget they asked for, arranged a lot of exhibition games to test their strength.

But, as the time of the Olympics was drawing close, the TEAM USA started performing from bad to worse. They lacked in team spirit, experience, discipline and the courage to fight. These words were reflected on the scoreboard along with a losing score.

The whole nation was against them, and the media was just adding fuel to the fire with their pessimistic and derogatory comments. Things just got worse when a second string USSR team drubbed TEAM USA by 1 to 1 in the last warm-up game. Mike Lupica, a famous sports writer of Daily News, New York, wrote that USA should pull out of the tournament, and save itself from the humiliation of letting

other teams setting new world records at its cost. According to Lupica the taxpayers deserved a lot better. He further wounded their growing injury by adding that "we should support Canada — who can win a gold." In ice hockey, rivalry between Canada and USA is no less prestigious than a sporting event between India and Pakistan.

After that catastrophe — right before the Olympics — coach Brooks called his team for a lengthy close-door meeting. Neither did he show any frustration at their performance, nor did he talk to them about their game plan or techniques. Calmly he explained, "Our goals will have to be changed. Now we must prove to our fans, the whole world and most importantly to ourselves that we belong here in this tournament. We must prove it to everybody that we have earned our right to be here. We must prove that we have the will to fight as a team, in doing so even if we lose all the games it doesn't matter, because your gold medal is your self respect that I will bring back after going through those excruciating games against those top class opponents."

Guess what happened next??? Miracle on the ice!!! Not only did they put their act together to win back their self respect, but they won the gold medal too, by beating their number one nemesis USSR by 4 goals to 3. By using the emotions of the players coach Brooks achieved the impossible. Let us now fly back to the present. The year is 1999. The event is World Cup cricket '99. The team is my beloved Bangladesh. Well, of course we are not expecting Bangladesh to

win the event. But performance wise if we make a comparison with that great hockey team, it will not be a crime to say that right before the tournament both are/were performing in the same manner. Winning a game is a distant thunder for us, even against weak teams like Scotland & Ireland. Both the teams were given good incentives. And finally both the teams were treated harshly by their respective media and fans right before the big event. *Deja vu!!!*

Now don't get me wrong, I am not saying that a pep talk will change the history. The most important point is that these boys should be told: like team USA, that in the World Cup they should fight to earn their own self respect back. Aren't these the same guys who got us the ticket for the World Cup? How soon do we forget. In the midst of the pressure to do well, and our negative attitude towards their performance they have lost it. Forget winning, just to do well they need to get it back.

So, I believe at this crucial time our fallen hero's should be injected with this emotionally uplifting goal — Get yourself respect back & nothing more, which will enable them to achieve the much-needed positive thinking attitude in the cricket field.

Finally, as an optimistic supporter of Bangladesh, I hope that cricket fans will not only remember this World Cup as the last of the millennium, but they will also remember it as the World Cup where eleven Bangladeshis fought together to tell the whole world that, "We have earned our right to be here, and it was no fluke!!!"

Dynamo back to the top

BUDAPEST, Apr 19 (Reuters/Internet): A goal by Andriy Shevchenko, one of European soccer's hottest properties, returned Dynamo Kiev to the top of the Ukrainian first division.

In Hungary, the Budapest derby between Ferencvaros and Ujpest was again the scene of violent clashes between fans and police. Ferencvaros won 1-0.

In Ukraine, Champions' League semifinalists Dynamo Kiev reclaimed the top spot in the Ukrainian first division from Shakhtar Donetsk with a 1-0 home win over Kryvbas Kriviy Rih.

But Dynamo, playing without injured striker Serhiy Rebrov were unimpressive in their last game before their European Cup semifinal second leg clash with Bayern Munich on Wednesday.

Kiev top striker Andriy Shevchenko scored from a 24m free kick — his 13 league goal of the season — on the stroke of half-time.

Shakhtar suffered their first defeat under former Russia coach Anatoly Byshovets, going down 2-1 at home to mid-table Zirka Kirovohrad.

Jozsef Torgyan caused a storm by criticising the police. He called for an inquiry into what he called "brutal and uncalled for police intervention".

Ferencvaros won a dull game 1-0 thanks to a second-half goal from defender Janos Matyus. Ujpest played the bulk of the game with 10 men after defender Zoltan Tamasi was sent off.

There was also trouble at another all-Budapest clash. Kispest-Honved fans attacked MTI Budapest supporters as their team lost 2-0 to the league leaders.

In Romania, an injury time goal from substitute Tersinio Ganea gave leaders Dinamo Bucharest a 2-1 home victory over struggling Universitatea Craiova, opening a three-point lead over rivals Rapid Bucharest.

Craiova took a surprise lead through midfielder Claudiu Negru. Dinamo skipper Ionel Lupescu equalising from a first half penalty.

Rapid managed only a 2-2 draw against Petrolul Ploiesti. Two down at the break, Rapid fought back with goals from Nicolae Stanciu and top scorer Ionel Gane.

for the victory with four key players picking up injuries and almost certain to miss the forthcoming clash with Spartak Varna.

CSKA Sofia's hopes of earning a spot in Europe next season all but ended with a 2-0 defeat at home to Metalurg Pernik.

In Poland, runaway league leaders Wisla Krakow enjoyed a comfortable 3-1 win away to Amica Wronki, maintaining their 15-point lead at the top.

The top six slots remained unchanged with second-placed Widzew Lodz defeating fourth-placed Legia Warsaw 3-2 in the most attractive fixture of the weekend.

Artur Wichniarek, the league's top scorer, raised his season's haul to 17 when he scored the 43rd minute winner.

In Czech Republic, Teplice pulled within seven points of leaders Sparta Prague with a 4-0 home win over Hradec Kralove. Jaromir Jindraček was on target twice.

Brief Scores

Mukul Fouz Green: 177 for 4 in 35 overs (Imran 65, Masud not out 41, Shuvo 27; Mohammad 1/15, Nasir 1/16)

Al Helal AC: 139 all out in 28.4 overs (Mohammad 45, Hasan 21, Apu 21; Sohag 2/15, Masud 2/18)

Nilkamal Club: 107 for all in 27.1 overs (Bappi 28; Utpal 2/4, Russel 2/13, Alamgir 2/18, Liton 2/24)

Golden Future Boys Club: 95 for all in 24.2 overs (Noor Mohammad 22, Utpal 22; Murad 4/32, Krishna 3/13)

Ribbeck leaves out Moeller

BONN, Apr 19 (Reuters/Internet): Germany head coach Erich Ribbeck left out Borussia Dortmund midfielder Andreas Moeller and called up TSV 1860 Munich's Horst Heldt for the first time when he named his squad for a friendly against Scotland in Bremen on April 28.

Bayer Leverkusen midfielder Stefan Beinlich, troubled by a sore knee, was not included in the 21-man squad released on Monday. Also missing was Bayern Munich midfielder Mario Basler.

Six Bayern players are in the squad, among them veteran libero Lothar Matthaeus.

Independence Cup 'b'ball

Dharmketu Club earned their second victory in the Independence Cup basketball competition beating Eagles Club by 48-47 at the Dhamonudi Basketball Gymnasium yesterday, reports UNB.

In the day's very exciting match, the winners led the first half by 25-23. Nahad scored 14 and Pintu 12 for the winners while Azad 18 and Abir 14 for the losers.

China's low goals

BEIJING, Apr 19: China's swimming association has set a low-key target for its swimmers at the Olympic Games in Sydney next year, state media reported Sunday, says AFP.

The national swimming association medal target is for China's representatives to win one gold medal in the women's events and any medal in the men's events. Xinhua news agency said.

The lower expectations are mainly because of Chinese swimmers' poor performance at the 1996 Olympic Games and the fairly low world rankings last year, it said quoting sports observers.

Real Madrid's Pedja Mijatovic (C) tries to go through two Valencia players during their Spanish Primera Liga match on April 18.



Real Madrid's Pedja Mijatovic (C) tries to go through two Valencia players during their Spanish Primera Liga match on April 18. — AFP photo



Montpellier's Jean-Christophe Roviere (L) tries to fight for the ball against Metz's Frederic Meyrieu in their French Cup semifinal on April 18. — AFP photo

Bologna await Marseille

ROME, Apr 19 (Reuters/Internet): French league leaders Olympique Marseille will have to break down the doors of Fortress Bologna on Tuesday if they are to progress to the UEFA Cup final.

The Italian side are enjoying their best run of home form since 1973 as they prepare for the second leg of their semifinal after the goalless opener in France.

Carlo Mazzone's side, seeking to win their first ever European trophy, have won their last five home matches, scoring 14 goals in the process.

They crowned that run with a 3-0 defeat of title hopefuls Fiorentina on Saturday, despite resting several key players ahead of the biggest European tie of their 90-year history.

Furthermore, they have never lost a European match at their elegant art deco Dall'Ara stadium in a run stretching back 34 years and 23 matches to the last Italian championship-winning Bologna side of the 1960s.

Having failed to find an away goal in Marseille in the first leg, Bologna need another victory if they are to become the first team to reach the UEFA Cup final via the Intertoto Cup.

According to their captain Michele Paramatti, that should not be too difficult.

"The 0-0 in the first leg was a positive result for us and was what we were looking for when we set out," he said. "We've always won at the Dall'Ara in Eu-

rope (this season) and if these things count for anything then we are well placed."

Paramatti has the curious role of "European captain" for Bologna while tough defender Giancarlo Marocchi captains the side in their league matches.

"It happened by accident," said Paramatti, a key figure in a tremendous European campaign which kicked off in July.

"It's an idea which has brought us good luck so far. Let's hope it continues to do so."

Bologna, who were in the third division just four years ago and are contesting their first European semifinal for 38 years, will be at full strength for the visit of Marseille, who signalled their intent with a 4-0 demolition of lowly Nancy to return to the top of the French league last week.

The little big man partnership of Swedish striker Kennet Andersson and former Lazio

TEAMS

Bologna: Francesco Antonioli; Giovanni Bia, Amadeo Mangone, Alessandro Rinaldi, Michele Paramatti, Giancarlo Marocchi, Kias Ingesson, Davide Fontolan, Jonatan Binotto; Giuseppe Signori, Kennet Andersson.

Marseille: Stephane Porato; William Gallas, Laurent Blanc, Cyril Domoraud, Edson; Frederic Brandt, Peter Luccini; Robert Pires, Christophe Dugarry; Fabrizio Ravanelli, Florian Maurice/Titi Camara.

idol Giuseppe Signori is likely to back in place after both were rested against Fiorentina, along with rock solid fullback Giovanni Bia.

Signori, with five goals in the competition so far, needs three more to become the club's all-time top scorer in Europe.

Despite Bologna's formidable home record, Marseille coach Roland Courbis still believes his side can win the tie with a scoring draw.

"(Bologna) will have the worry about elimination if we score," Courbis said. "I don't think they can score two goals against us."

Fowler hurt in hotel brawl

LIVERPOOL, Apr 19: Liverpool and England striker Robbie Fowler was back in the headlines for the wrong reasons Monday after suffering a suspected broken nose in a fight at a Liverpool hotel, reports AP.

The incident occurred early Sunday morning just as Fowler was starting a six-match ban imposed by the Football Association for two on-field misconduct charges.

Merseyside police said a 41-year-old man was charged with assaulting Fowler and a second man was bailed to appear in court on May 25.

"As a result of this incident Mr Fowler and another male received injuries," a police statement said. "In Mr Fowler's case this included a suspected broken nose."

A Liverpool spokesman said the club was aware that Fowler had suffered facial injuries in the hotel fight but declined to comment while police continued investigations.

The 24-year-old forward was aiming to make the England team to play ition would be monitored.

It has been a turbulent two months for Fowler.

He was suspended for four league matches and fined 32,000 pounds (50,560 dollars) by the FA and a similar sum by Liverpool for snorting a goal against Everton on April 3 by pretending to snort cocaine.

Fowler was also suspended for two matches after making crude sexual taunts and gestures toward England teammate Le Saux in a league match against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge on Feb. 27.

On Saturday, Fowler played his last match for Liverpool this season in a 1-0 loss to Aston Villa.

China's low goals

BEIJING, Apr 19: China's swimming association has set a low-key target for its swimmers at the Olympic Games in Sydney next year, state media reported Sunday, says AFP.