

## Sport

Sydney Games  
500 days away

SYDNEY, May 3 (AP): An optimist, Michael Knight wants the Olympic bribery scandal to just go away.

Announcing cuts for the Sydney 2000 Olympic budget which he blamed in part on the scandal, the president of Sydney's organising committee said the bad times were now behind them and the way was clear to go forward.

With Tuesday marking 500 days to go and the bribery scandal still dominating Olympic news six months after it erupted in December, the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games wants badly to refocus attention back on the athletes and the competition.

Preparations for the Sydney Games are well advanced, with venues and Games Villages finished ahead of schedule or on track, positive if not squeaky-clean testing of the stadium and transport systems, and issuing of the huge events schedule.

The IOC's coordination commission led by Jacques Rogge inspected Sydney's preparations in late April and came away generally impressed with venues, transport, accommodation, security and coordination with international sporting bodies.

"We are very satisfied," Rogge said.

But budget problems continue to dog SOCOG.

The cuts — 50 million Australian dollars (32.5 million US) slashed from SOCOG's forecast sponsorship revenue and an extra 25 million Australian dollars (16 million US) allocated to the "rainy day" contingency fund — came after months of speculation about whether Sydney's sponsorship target was achievable.

Rogge said it was always overambitious, but accepted that the IOC's votes-for-bribes scandal contributed to damage by discouraging sponsors.

He said reform of the IOC would mean that "by games time, there will be a totally new, better functioning IOC."

Sydney organisers say the cuts will be made through "reorganisation of priorities" rather than budget slashing. The "core quality" of the Games won't be affected, although "we are not considering anything immune," Knight said.

SOCOG still has to find about 170 million Australian dollars (110 million US) by games time, a figure Rogge said was achievable.

While none have pulled out, sponsors are unhappy at the damage the IOC scandal has done to Olympics marketability and told Rogge so at a meeting in April.

The IOC cleaned house after investigating votes-for-bribes allegations stemming from Salt Lake City's bid for the Winter Olympics. Ten IOC members resigned or were fired, two were severely censured and five others were issued warnings.

The case of Phil Coles, an Australian IOC member who was censured after the Salt Lake investigation and stands further accused of receiving excessive gifts from another bidding city, has been an additional thorn in Sydney's side. His case is expected to be decided by the IOC this week.

While the scandal has simmered, Sydney organisers are gearing up their campaigns to garner public support.

More than 100,000 people attended the opening of the Olympic Stadium in March with a fireworks display and rugby league games. Other test events have been marred only slightly by a transport glitch which once sent a trainload of city-bound spectators in the wrong direction.

The path of the Olympic Torch relay is so extensive — including an underwater visit to the Great Barrier Reef — that even people living in the most remote town will not have to travel far to see it.

SOCOG's next big challenge is to sell 5 million tickets reserved for Australians to the 1,700 events covering 28 sports, which go on sale in late May.

Knight says the necessary cuts are a "drop in the bucket" of the overall budget worth 2.5 billion Australian dollars (1.6 billion US). But there is no doubt having to find the savings is putting pressure on the overall budget.

## Modern Body Building lift title

Modern Body Building Club of Dinaurpur emerged as champions bagging 203 points in the first club-basis Weightlifting competition at the Mirpur Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium yesterday, reports UNB.

Baidyanath Dutta of Kushtia became runners-up in the competition securing 186 points.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Quader distributed prizes as the chief guest.

A total of 92 weightlifters from 16 teams took part in the meet in eight categories.

## Six bidders for 2006 WC

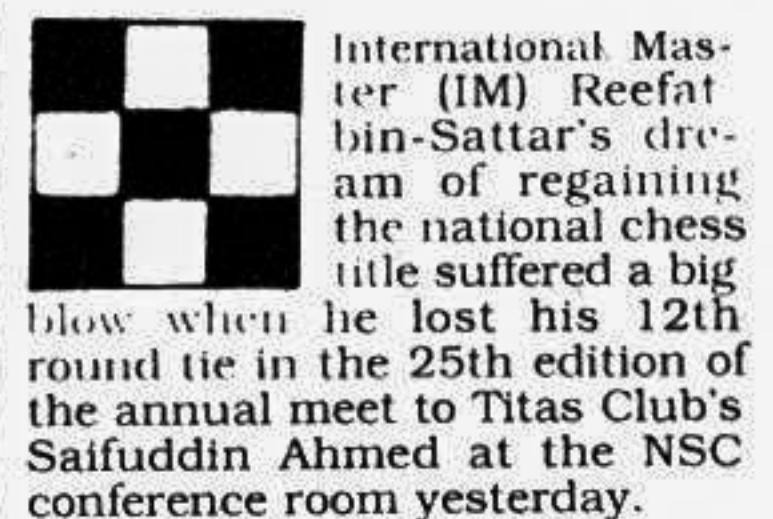
ZURICH, May 3: Six countries were in the bidding to host soccer's World Cup in 2006 after Egypt and Ghana apparently dropped out, FIFA said Monday, reports AP.

Six countries — Brazil, England, Germany, Nigeria, South Africa and Morocco — confirmed their bids by the April 30 deadline, said a statement by world soccer's governing body.

The next major deadline in the competition is July 31, by which time candidates must present their bid files to FIFA, the statement said. The winner is to be chosen next March.

## Reefat's gaffe aids Enamul

Sports Reporter



International Master (IM) Reefat bin-Sattar's dream of regaining the national chess title suffered a big blow when he lost his 12th round tie in the 25th edition of the annual meet to Titus Club's Saifuddin Ahmed at the NSC conference room yesterday.

Playing with white pieces against the Modern defence of Saifuddin, Reefat, the former champion, who plays for Biman, lost the board after 33 moves.

Reefat, with yesterday's defeat, remained glued to his pre-

vious collection of 8.5 points and lost the second spot in the 16 player meet to national junior champion Enamul Hossain of Titus Club, who raised his tally to nine points after defeating Mohammad Javed in the 12th round.

Playing with black pieces, Enamul, who drew his 11th round clash with Rezaul Haque, adopted the French defence against Javed and checkmated Javed after 41 moves.

Defending champion IM Ziaur Rahman of Biman, meanwhile, maintained his sole lead with an easy win over fellow IM and last year's runner-up Abdulla-Al-Rakib.

Zia, with his whites, took only 30 moves to overhaul the Queen's Indian defence of Rakib and remained atop the table with 10 out of a possible 12 points.

Ali Amjad of Ansars won his 12th round clash against Taibur Rahman of BUET. Playing with black pieces, Amjad checkmated Taibur after a long spell of 57 moves.

In the day's other matches, Biman's Rezaul Haque beat Sawkat Hossain of Ansars, Khorsheed Alam defeated Narayanganj's Feroz Ahmed, and Sheikh Nasir Ahmed, of Ansars won his board against

## Round 13 fixture

Zia vs Khorsheed  
Ali Amjad vs Feroz  
Saifuddin vs Taibur  
Jamilur vs Reefat  
Aminul vs Nasir  
Rezaul vs Monir  
Javed vs Sawkat  
Rakib vs Enamul

Jadukar Samad  
Kishore football

Adamjee Chandu Sporting Club and Narinda Palash Sporting Club reached the quarterfinals of the Jadukar Samad Kishore football tournament in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

In the first match, Adamjee outplayed Gabtali Lalkuthi Sporting Club 4-0 after leading the first half 1-0 at the Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Narinda defeated Ganderia Power Sun Sporting Club 3-1. The match was locked 1-1 in the first half.

## Goodbye Godfrey Evans



LONDON, May 3 (Reuters/Internet): Godfrey Evans, a spectacular and outstandingly successful wicketkeeper for Kent and England in the 1940s and 1950s, died on Monday following a heart attack, family friends said. He was 78.

Evans was England's automatic choice as keeper from 1946 until 1959, playing in 91 Tests. He had 219 dismissals and was also a talented lower-order batsman, scoring 2,439 test runs which included two centuries.

A great entertainer on the field whose enjoyment of life made him a good companion off it, Evans ranks high in a great tradition of Kent wicketkeepers.

He followed his county team mate Les Ames into the England side at the end of the 1946 season and was subsequently an inspiration to Alan Knott, who was Kent and England keeper in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Evans always stood up to bowlers unless they were really fast, proving particularly effective against the fast-medium pace of Alex Bedser in tests, and he pulled off some athletic catches at his brilliant best.

A nimble batsman, he could score swiftly and also defend resolutely, as he demonstrated by going 95 minutes without scoring against Australia in the fourth Test of the 1946-47 series in Adelaide.

Former England all-rounder Trevor Bayliss, who played in tests with Evans many times, said on BBC radio: "I think he



An AFP file photo of late England Test wicketkeeper Godfrey Evans taken during the Old England vs Old Australia match in August 1980.

was the best wicketkeeper for the big match, far better for test cricket than for Kent.

"He brought off some won-

derful catches. He was also a great man to have in a crisis, and wonderful man to have on tour. He loved a party."

## MCC favour for Afghans



KABUL, May 3 (Reuters): Two of the world's more conservative institutions, the Taliban movement and England's Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) came together in Kabul's battered national stadium on Monday to give Afghan cricket a boost.

The occasion was attended by Mullah Abdul Shokur Mutmaen, president of the AOC and a member of the Taliban movement.

Bentham and a small but enthusiastic crowd watched as Afghan players staged an exhibition match using some of the equipment, which included expensive bats of "English willow made in England".

Bentham is a frequent visitor to Kabul, despite official warnings from his government to stay away from the country because of the reported presence of suspected Saudi terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden.

"So I got in touch with the MCC on return to London and they got in contact with the ICC (International Cricket Conference) and we put together enough equipment for two adult and two junior sides."

The patch of waste land on which Bentham saw two sides playing is owned by the Iraqi embassy, which closed in the

year 1990s.

"I've been very impressed by the level of cricket here. They have one or two really handy players, especially the quick bowlers, and I'd probably need some of this equipment if I was facing them," said Bentham, gesturing towards pads and protective groin boxes.

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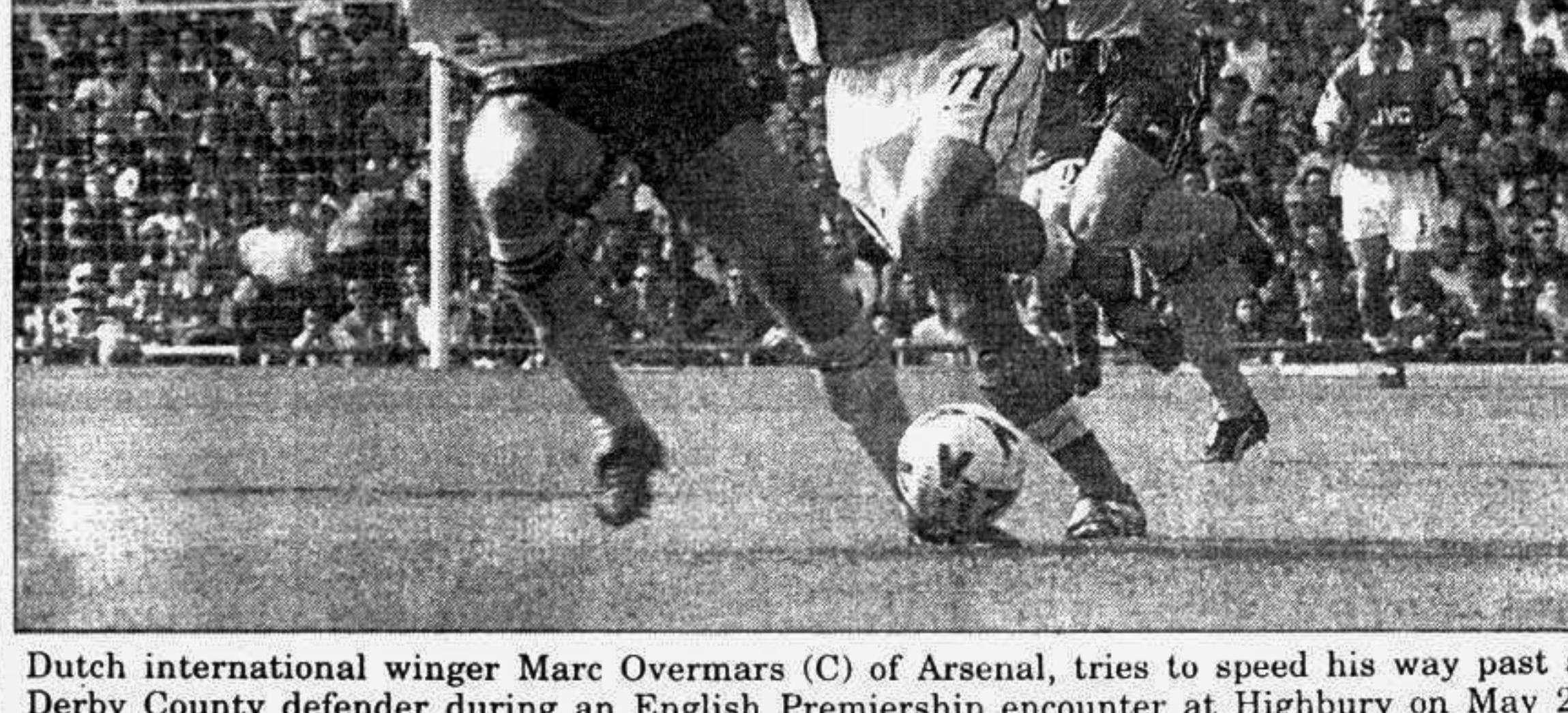
Bentham is a frequent visitor to Kabul, despite official warnings from his government to stay away from the country because of the reported presence of suspected Saudi terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden.

"It's a more popular game than you think. Perhaps 20 per cent of Afghans (men) play the game," he said.

Mohammed Ehsan Mutmaen, secretary general of the AOC, said in a brief acceptance speech that he hoped the donation would pave the way for our cricket team so that we can take part in Olympic cricket in the year 2000 (in Sydney)."

In the distance could be heard the crump of artillery fire from a front line only 25 km (15 miles) from the capital where the Taliban and opposition fighters have been dug in for more than two years.

Cricket in Afghanistan is an embryonic sport which proba-



Dutch international winger Marc Overmars (C) of Arsenal, tries to speed his way past a Derby County defender during an English Premiership encounter at Highbury on May 2. Arsenal won 1-0. — AFP photo

## Valderrama's desire

BOGOTA, May 3: Colombian soccer star Carlos Valderrama, known lately for clashing with his coaches, now says he wants to be one, reports AP.

Valderrama said Sunday he would like to coach his country's national team.

"It's one of my great ambitions, but for it to happen, I have to work hard and show that I'm up to it," he was quoted as saying in an interview in El Espectador newspaper.

For now, however, the mop-haired 38-year-old midfielder said he has no intentions of ending his playing career.

"El Pibe" will be around for a long time," said Valderrama, calling himself by his nickname in Colombia.

Valderrama, who has led Colombia in several World Cups and stars in US Major League Soccer, was transferred a week ago from the Miami Fusion to the Tampa Bay Mutiny after clashing with Miami's coach, two Wortmann. The Brazilian complained that Valderrama was trying to run the team from the field.

Should his coaching dream comes true, said Valderrama, he wouldn't shy away from choosing other players with reputations for sparring with their bosses.

His dream team would include Faustino Asprilla — a star in Italian soccer — who was benched during the 1998 World Cup in France after publicly complaining when his coach removed him from a game, said Valderrama.

ATLANTA, May 3: Austrian qualifier Stefan Koubek capped his surprising run at the AT&T Challenge by playing a "perfect match" on Sunday to claim his first career title on the ATP Tour, reports Reuters.

The 22-year-old Koubek dismantled fifth-seeded Frenchman Sebastien Grosjean 6-1, 6-2 in 56 minutes to become the first qualifier and lowest-ranked player ever to win this clay court event.

"Today, it was just a perfect match. I was hitting winners all over the place and he didn't have a chance," said the Austrian who collected 46,000 dollars for a victory that will propel his ranking from 97th in the world to 67.

"I feel like I can keep on playing like this forever," gushed Koubek, who also claimed fourth seed Michael Chang and eighth seed Magnus Larsson among his seeded scalps this week.

Koubek, who had to win three qualifying matches to get into the main draw here, had just three match victories on his ATP Tour resume prior to his five wins this week.

The 40th-ranked Grosjean, who reached the Lipton Championships final this year and was also gunning for his first tour title, figured to give Koubek a tougher time following his impressive semifinal win over Jim Courier.

But the Frenchman was never in Sunday's match.

He managed just one winner in the 22-minute first set and had only one break point against Koubek for the match, which he failed to convert.

Grosjean said the courts played faster Sunday than they had earlier in the week when wet weather slowed things down and he had trouble adjusting.

"I only touched the ball and it was flying," said Grosjean, who earned \$27,000 as the runner-up. "I couldn't hit the ball fast so I tried only to push the ball."

Grosjean, whose ranking is expected to rise to a career-high of 33, said he wasn't discouraged by his most lopsided defeat of the year.

"When Afghanistan was going from bad to worse during the war (three years ago), we got together and with our own money tried to develop the game to prove that Afghanistan has good cricketers," said Allah Ada, captain of the national side.

The national side includes a carpet salesman, a student of neurology, a broadcaster on national Sharif Taleban radio and the radio operator for the Medecins Sans Frontieres aid agency. It has yet to play an international game, but earnestly wants to.

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"It's a more popular game than you think. Perhaps 20 per cent of Afghans (men) play the game," he said.

The Ethics Commission of top international personalities was established last month as part of reforms in the wake of the Salt Lake City bribery scandal, in which 10 International Olympic Committee members were expelled or resigned for receiving improper inducements during the campaign for the 2002 Winter Games.

It means to help the IOC operate "in accordance with the best practices of international governance," draw up ethical rules, study the Olympic bidding and selection process, ensure accountability and enforce compliance with a new code of conduct.

The commission will report the outcome of its opening discussions Monday to an IOC Executive Board meeting on Tuesday.

One of the items up for discussion will likely be the fate of embattled Australian IOC member Phil Coles, who has already received a "most severe warning" from the IOC for travel and accommodation perks from Salt Lake City. He is under renewed scrutiny since his ex-wife claimed that member of Athens' unsuccessful bid for the 1996 Olympics gave her jewelry.

It might also discuss the case of South Korean executive board member Kim Un-yong, who also received a "most severe warning" and is the highest-ranking official implicated in the Salt Lake affair. Kim could face expulsion if it is proved that he knew that the Salt Lake committee paid for his son's salary at a telecommunications company.



Patrick Kluivert (C), Barcelona's Dutch international striker is sandwiched between two Deportivo La Coruna defenders during their Primera Liga clash on May 2. — AFP photo

## Barca in stunning form