

Bits & pieces

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been dismissed five times for a duck.

KIWILAND INCENTIVES

OLD TRAFFORD, June 14: Stephen Fleming's New Zealand have more than just prestige at stake as they prepare for the World Cup semi-final showdown against Pakistan here on Wednesday, reports AFP.

The team could win a million New Zealand dollars if they beat Pakistan and go on to win the tournament.

If New Zealand win their first World Cup they will receive a bonus of 450,000 New Zealand dollars (243,000 US) from their cricket board, in addition to the 550,000 dollars (300,000 US) prize money offered by the organisers.

The 15 players stand to gain 70,000 New Zealand dollars (37,800 US) each.

But coach Steve Rixon and four members of the team management have been excluded from the incentives.

New Zealand have reached three previous semi-finals without making it to the final.

During the 1992 World Cup at home, New Zealand lost a thrilling semi-final to Pakistan.

Pakistan fairly pleased

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tails up," he said. "I think it's given them a little bit of momentum."

"But I tell you what, it's made us that much more determined - hopefully we can lift our game by 10 per cent on Thursday."

"We've got three days now to rest and get our thoughts together."

The South Africans will at least be boosted by all-rounder Kallis likely return from a stomach muscle injury. Cronje said: "When you lose Jacques, you lose two cricketers - a batsman and a bowler."

Australian skipper Steve Waugh, Sunday's hero after scoring 120 not out off 110 balls, said he thought Australia were now the side to watch.

"I think the other teams will be more concerned about us," he said.

Waugh's side looked down and out after just one win - against Scotland - in their first three World Cup games.

Waugh had set his team the target of winning their next seven games in a row to take the title.

Sunday's win made it five out of five.

New Zealand, meanwhile, continued to enjoy their role as World Cup underdogs while plotting to upset Pakistan.

"Nobody really rated us in the early stages and that suited us fine," coach Steve Rixon said, but added: "I'd be very surprised if quite a few sides wouldn't trade a few of our guys."

Pakistan are a team of tremendously talented individuals while New Zealand, Rixon said, excelled through teamwork.

"Everyone understands the team needs must come first and then the individual needs come after that," he said.

"It is something which has moulded this side together... we began planning for this tournament 18 months ago and now we are in a situation where the final goal is to lift the World Cup."

Sequel may surpass original for drama

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been no pressure."

Their Australian coach Steve Rixon was more outspoken.

"Nobody really rated us in the early stages," Rixon said. "All the comments that were made about us were fairly bland and were obviously from people who haven't been watching New Zealand recently."

Pakistan will target the vulnerable New Zealand top-order batting with the extreme pace of Shoaib Akhtar, the late swing of captain Wasim Akram and the wiles of Saqlain Mushtaq, rated by Akram as the finest off-spin bowler he has seen.

They are 13-8 favourites to win the Cup, with Australia and South Africa both quoted at 5 and New Zealand the 15-2 outsiders.

World Waugh

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South African opener Herschelle Gibbs' 101.

Gibbs' knock was also pushed into the background by his dropped catch of Waugh, which will rank among the most bizarre incidents in World Cup history.

Waugh, then on 56, miscued a shot off Lance Klusener towards Gibbs, who seemed to have his hands under the ball.

But it slipped out as the fielder tried to throw the ball in the air. And Waugh made South Africa pay heavily for this lapse.

The course of the match was altered by a 126-run fourth-wicket stand between Waugh and Ricky Ponting (69), which sparked Australia's recovery.

Waugh said his team could chase any target but it was the team's wayward bowling which needed to be redressed.

"It was ordinary. We bowled on both sides of the wicket and definitely have some work to do there," Waugh said.

Super yet

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69 matches.

Between now and the next World Cup in South Africa in 2003 the organisers may have to settle for a refinement of the current tournament's improved, if not flawless, format.

Inside four camps

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Shane Warne was certain that the South Africans could think of something by 2003.

The Australian leg-spinner was again in the news with regard to newsmen back home who were after him. After revelations from the Aussie skipper Steve Waugh that the media pressure might force talented Warne out of international competition, fast bowler Allan McGrath has urged the star spinner not to take any rash decision.

Zimbabwe, the newest Test nation, who were edged out of the semi at the eleventh hour, as skipper Steve Waugh played the innings of his life to overwhelm South Africa's substantial total of 271 at Headingley yesterday, were going home as a proud team. Both coach David Howarth and captain Alistair Campbell were proud of their team's performance. The contentment of the African country was underlined by the coach, who said, "We are not going home to fire our captain or manager or anyone else."

That was perhaps Zimbabwe's way of making an oblique reference to the sacking of Sri Lanka's Arjuna Ranatunga, a course that England's Alec Stewart was under the grind

and calls for the head of India's Mohammad Azharuddin.

All successful captains over the years in this form or that, but World Cup paths demand a heavy price for failure.

Incidentally, Alec Stewart's ouster and the coronation of Nasir Hossain as England's captain are on hold. Selection Committee Chairman Tom Graveney said

that a further discussion will be required with Stewart and the matter was far from resolved. The statement was to some extent embarrassing for the British Press, some of which carried full-blown pictures of the 'new captain'.

The Pakistan captain Wasim Akram, however, does not think that changing the captain will do England any good. Instead, he has suggested on England to give their youth the chance to prove themselves. Even if they lose matches, it would not matter, as they would ripen in the years to come, was how Wasim saw the future.

Away at Birmingham, the South Africans and the Australians were filing their nails for a repeat of the Sunday encounter at Headingley that was clearly the tournament's most closely contested match. In that the Aussies sneaked past with

only two balls to spare.

For the Australians two-in-one Jacques Kallis would be in action after missing Sunday's match due to a stomach muscle injury. His absence proved costly, perhaps decisive, as captain Hansie Cronje and Boje had to bowl out his ten overs, giving away 79 runs for naught.

The South African captain considered Kallis indispensable and irreplaceable, as he was 'two cricketers...a batsman and a bowler'.

The Australian camp was exuding confidence after their dramatic entry into the last four. They were an example of how a defeat can inspire a great side. After falling short of Pakistan's 275 in a group match by only 10 runs at Headingley, many pundits and those not-so-such as Yours Truly gave them little chance against South Africa's 271 on Sunday.

Following defeat against Pakistan, the Australians were told that they had to win only seven more matches to take the Cup home. They have already won five. With only two games to win to reach their target, Sunday's man-of-the-match skipper Steve Waugh said, "The pressure is on Hansie Cronje."

New body takes over BCCSL

COLOMBO, June 14: A new management formally took charge of the crisis-ridden Sri Lankan cricket board amid a deepening debate over the future of skipper Arjuna Ranatunga, officials said Monday, reports AFP.

An ad hoc panel appointed by Sports Minister S.B. Disanayake assumed duties Monday, an official of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL) said.

"It is our ambition to safeguard Sri Lankan cricket and its future," a board spokesman said as bank executive Rennie Wijetilleke took charge of a 12-member team to manage the affairs of the board.

The appointment came after the board's office bearers were suspended by Colombo District court Thursday following a petition against president Thilanga Sumathipala's election in March.

Disanayake is empowered by law to appoint a team to run the board until the court gives a ruling.

Meanwhile, a debate deepened on Ranatunga's future following Sri Lanka's humiliating ouster from the current World Cup tournament being played in England.

In a letter to a newspaper Monday, Disanayake denied saying he did not expect Ranatunga to lead the team in the future.

Disanayake had been quoted in an interview with the BBC on Friday night as saying Ranatunga "got many things wrong in the tournament... He made several bad decisions... In future I believe he will play in the team but not as a captain."

The Sinhalese-language Lankadeepa Monday carried Disanayake's denial and also a transcript from the BBC's Sinhalese-language program Sandeshaya causing embarrassment to officials who had issued the denial on the minister's behalf.

A local television station on Sunday held a phone-in program with several prominent cricket personalities to discuss what went wrong with the team.

Many panellists and callers demanded Ranatunga's head while some defended the players saying they had given their best and that the skipper should not be held responsible for the debacle.

In a written statement from England, Ranatunga vowed to keep playing.

U-17 soccer WC draw held

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, June 14: Hosts New Zealand will meet the United States in the opening match of the under-17 soccer World Cup on November 10 following the draw on Monday, reports AFP.

The other teams in Group A are Uruguay and Poland.

"It is a dream first-up game for us really," New Zealand coach Kevin Fallon said. "They are the only team of the 15 qualifiers we have played. We drew 0-0 with them in Christchurch last December despite playing the last 20 minutes with only 10 men. In playing the US we are not walking into the unknown."

Group C appears to be the toughest. Brazil have been drawn with Mali and Germany and the winners of the yet-to-be-decided home and away playoffs between Australia and Bahrain.

In Group B, Ghana, Spain, Mexico, and Thailand, all champions of their respective confederations, have been drawn together.

The fourth group, in Dunedin, is headed by surprise African qualifiers Burkina Faso and South American hopefuls Paraguay. They will be joined by Jamaica and Qatar.

The final and the playoff for third will be played at North Harbour Stadium on November 27.

GROUP A. North Harbour Stadium, Albany: New Zealand, United States, Uruguay, Poland.

GROUP B. McLean Park, Napier: Ghana, Spain, Mexico, Thailand.

GROUP C. QEII Stadium, Christchurch: Brazil, Australia or Bahrain, Mali, Germany.

GROUP D. Carisbrook, Dunedin: Jamaica, Burkina Faso, Paraguay, Qatar.

Mark after Shoaib

MANCHESTER, June 14: Mark Mascarenhas, the agent who transformed Sachin Tendulkar into a multimillionaire through lucrative commercial endorsements, is on the verge of doing the same for Pakistani speedster Shoaib Akhtar, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old bowler, who aims to shepherd Pakistan into Sunday's World Cup final by defeating New Zealand on Wednesday, caused a sensation in February when he uprooted Tendulkar's middle stump in front of 80,000 shocked fans in Calcutta.

It was the first time that the Indian idol had ever been dismissed first ball in a test match.

Mascarenhas, the president of WorldTel, a Connecticut-based television broadcasting company, was quick to recognize Akhtar's talent and a business opportunity.

Akhtar is currently the world's fastest bowler with a delivery recorded at 96 miles per hour (155.5 kilometers per hour) and could be the first bowler to break the 100 mph (162 kmph) barrier.

The extrovert Akhtar, who is partial to a touch of western nightlife, is a native of Rawalpindi, which has earned him the nickname Rawalpindi express.

Akhtar's "greatest value will be playing in England as a professional cricketer, and my advice to him is to keep on getting wickets, and to focus on bowling the other side out," said Mascarenhas, an ethnic Indian who has lived in the United States since gaining a masters degree in communications in the seventies.

His imminent deal with Akhtar has once again, shown that business and money transcend national or religious divides. Mascarenhas sees nothing odd in the fact that an Indian should be promoting a player from Pakistan, India's arch enemy.

"We have more Muslims in India than there are in Pakistan, and we look at Pakistan as our very much part of our own country," said Mascarenhas.

"Maybe they would disagree

with that because they have their own land, but I am always filled with admiration for their ability," said the Bangalore-born Mascarenhas.

Akhtar is the first non-Indian to be contracted by Mascarenhas, who says that he decided to manage players because of his love of cricket rather than for any financial motivation.



As Tendulkar's agent, he sold rights to various companies for using the batting genius to endorse their products by appearing in advertisements and using their logos on his equipment and uniforms.

But Tendulkar's financial success can only stem from his game, Mascarenhas said.

"That has always been the focus of my relationship with Sachin. He is about runs, and when he gets runs, his team does well and his country does well, and that is where the value is," he said.

BATTING, BOWLING SO FAR

LONDON, June 14(AFP): Top batting and bowling performances at the World Cup after Sunday's final Super Six match * denotes not out:

BATTING	
183—Saurav Ganguly (India) v Sri Lanka, May 26, Taunton	
140—Sachin Tendulkar (India) v Kenya, May 23, Bristol	
132—Neil Johnson (Zimbabwe) v Australia, June 8, Lord's	
120—Steve Waugh (Australia) v South Africa, June 13, Headingley	
104—Rahul Dravid (India) v Kenya, May 23, Bristol	
104—Mark Waugh (Australia) v Zimbabwe, June 9, Lord's	
103—Saeed Anwar (Pakistan) v Zimbabwe, June 11, The Oval	
101—Herschelle Gibbs (South Africa) v Australia, June 13, Headingley	
100—Ajay Jadeja (India) v Australia, June 4, The Oval	
97—Saurav Ganguly (India) v South Africa, May 15, Hove	
96—Jacques Kallis (South Africa) v India, May 15, Hove	
91—Herschelle Gibbs (South Africa) v New Zealand, June 10, Birmingham	
88—Nasser Hussain (England) v Kenya, May 18, Canterbury	
88—Alec Stewart (England) v Sri Lanka, May 14, Lord's	
83—Mark Waugh (Australia) v India, June 4, The Oval	
82—Maurice Oduame (Kenya) v Sri Lanka, May 30, Southampton	
82—Gary Kirsten (South Africa) v New Zealand, June 10, Birmingham	
81—Yousuf Youhana (Pakistan) v Scotland, May 20, Durham	
81—Inzamam-ul-Haq (Pakistan) v Australia, May 23, Leeds	
80—Roger Twose (New Zealand) v Australia, May 20, Cardiff	
80—Ridley Jacobs (West Indies) v New Zealand, May 24, Southampton	
77—Shivnarine Chanderpaul (West Indies) v Pakistan, May 16, Bristol	
76—Darren Lehmann (Australia) v New Zealand, May 20, Cardiff	
76—Gavin Hamilton (Scotland) v Pakistan, May 20, Durham	
76—Neil Johnson (Zimbabwe) v South Africa, May 29, Birmingham	
75—Robin Singh (India) v Australia, June 4, The Oval	

BOWLING	
5-14 — Glenn McGrath (Australia) v West Indies, May 30, Manchester	
5-21 — Lance Klusener (South Africa) v Kenya, May 26, Amstelveen	
5-27 — Venkatesh Prasad (India) v Pakistan, June 8, Old Trafford	
5-31 — Robin Singh (India) v Sri Lanka, May 26, Worcester	
5-35 — Saqlain Mushtaq (Pakistan) v Bangladesh, May 31, Northampton	
4-7 — Chris Harris (New Zealand) v Scotland, May 31, Edinburgh	
4-17 — Allan Donald (South Africa) v England, May 22, The Oval	
4-25 — Courtney Walsh (West Indies) v Bangladesh, May 21, Dublin	
4-34 — Darren Gough (England) v Kenya, May 18, Canterbury	
4-37 — Alan Mullally (England) v Sri Lanka, May 14, Lord's	
4-40 — Geoff Allott (New Zealand) v Australia, May 20, Cardiff	
4-40 — Wasim Akram (Pakistan) v Bangladesh, May 24, Edinburgh	
4-42 — Neil Johnson (Zimbabwe) v Kenya, May 15, Taunton	
4-46 — Mervyn Dillon (West Indies) v New Zealand, May 24, Southampton	
4-56 — Debashish Mohanty (India) v Kenya, May 23, Bristol	
4-64 — Geoff Allott (New Zealand) v Pakistan, May 28, Derby	

HATTRICK
Saqlain Mushtaq (Pakistan) v Zimbabwe, June 11, The Oval.

Praises from the land of Proteas

JOHANNESBURG, June 14 (Reuters/Internet): The South African media were full of praise for Steve Waugh and his Australian team in the wake of their World Cup win against the national side on Sunday.

Australia won by five wickets at Headingley to stay in the tournament and set up a return match against Hansie Cronje's team in the semi-finals on Thursday.

Victory looked certain for South Africa when they reduced Australia to 48 for three and needing 272 to win, but then Waugh produced one of his greatest innings in scoring an unbeaten 120 to turn the match around.

"All credit to Australia and Waugh in particular," said the Durban newspaper The Mercury under the headline "Prepare for World Waugh II."

But the paper also chided opening batsman Herschelle Gibbs, despite his 101 which set up South Africa's total of 271 for seven.

Gibbs was criticised for botching a simple catch offered by Waugh when he had made 56. "Gibbs hero and villain as Aussies stage stirring recovery," it said in a sub-headline.

Gibbs seemed to have taken the catch at midwicket, but the ball slipped from his fingers as he went to throw it up in celebration.

"It was an unnecessary, flamboyant lapse which could yet determine the destiny of the Cup," the Mercury said.

"Instead of holding onto the ball, he was trying to throw it up in triumph, lost control and Waugh batted on," and on.

In Cape Town, the Cape Times headlined its report: "SA in dire need of Kallis double act" with reference to the absence of key allrounder Jacques Kallis from Sunday's match.

Kallis was unable to play because of a stomach muscle injury, and South Africa suffered as Hansie Cronje and left-arm spinner Nicky Boje conceded 79 runs in 10 overs between them.

Youhana

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risked.

"I feel we can manage with the same combination that beat Zimbabwe last week," Mushtaq said. "But we may have to play him if we reach the final."

Mushtaq hinted that Youhana might have been asked to play if Pakistan had faced South Africa or Australia, rather than the New Zealanders.

"I don't want to sound complacent, but it is obvious to everyone we have an easier game than the other one," he said.

Youhana was in great touch before the injury, he now has time to recover for the final."

Mushtaq, however, confirmed that three other players on the injured list, Ijaz Ahmed, Moin Khan and Imtiaz Haq, had recovered.

Highs & lows

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Zealand, June 10, Edgbaston 282-6—Australia v India, June 4, The Oval
275-8—Pakistan v Australia, May 23, Headingley
275-8—Sri Lanka v Kenya, May 30, Southampton
272-5—Australia v South Africa, June 13, Headingley
271-7—South Africa v Australia, June 13, Headingley
271-9—Pakistan v Zimbabwe, June 11, The Oval
269-8—Pakistan v New Zealand, May 28, Derby
265—Australia v Pakistan, May 23, Headingley

LOWEST TOTALS

68—Scotland v West Indies, May 27, Leicester
103—England v South Africa, May 22, The Oval
110—West Indies v Australia, May 30, Manchester
Sri Lanka v South Africa, May 19, Northampton
116—Bangladesh v New Zealand, May 17, Chelmsford
121—Scotland v New Zealand, May 31, Edinburgh
123—Zimbabwe v Pakistan, June 11, The Oval

Morace to coach Italian women

ROME, June 14: Carolina Morace, Italy's most successful woman footballer ever, is to make history next season when she becomes the first woman to coach an Italian soccer team in an official championship, reports AFP.

Morace, 35, hung up her boots in June last year after a career spanning two decades in which she won 12 league titles, four Italian Cups and 150 international caps (scoring 105 goals, out of a career total of 554).

A law graduate, who in 1998 came within three votes of being judged the greatest woman player of all time, Morace will coach Rome club Viss Roma in "Protezione", just three leagues below professional football.

Unfazed by the breakthrough in such a male bastion, Morace said, "The men might be embarrassed about it, but I won't be. And anyway, aren't there women teachers who take courses in front of classes of men? It'll be the same."

"And I think the embarrassment will soon disappear. The important thing is to talk the same language in terms of football and to treat the players for what they are, men, and much mature ones than in the past."

"They deserve respect, and that's something which is denied them by a lot of male coaches."

But she warned her future squad, "I'm not the tender type, there are some things that I'm intransigent about. I'm used to talking frankly."

Away from the pitch

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days while the card hung on the side of a department store in Hyderabad.

India's film industry says it expects a plunge of around 40 percent in box-office takings over the next month, as people switch to the World Cup. Analysts estimate the loss of income at around 35 million US dollars.

May 14: Australian Shane Warne tells Sri Lankan captain Arjuna Ranatunga in remarks published on the opening day of the Cup that the sport would be better off without him. He says he does not like Ranatunga and no longer respects him as a player.

Sri Lankan cricket captain Arjuna Ranatunga says the remarks show "more about Shane Warne and Australian culture rather than about me and our culture. We have a culture that is 2,500 years old - I think we all know where they (Australians) come from."

May 15: Wives of some of the Indian cricketers return home to allow their husbands to focus better on the World Cup.

Australian selector Allan Border questions whether Shane Warne will make himself available to tour Sri Lanka later this year following his acrimonious public spat with Ranatunga.

South African manager Bob Woolmer apologises after captain Hansie Cronje is caught on television taking dressing-room instructions through an ear piece during the match against India at Hove. Woolmer says: "If I have upset anyone, then I apologise. I was just trying to be innovative."

Warne gets a fine and a two-match suspended ban following his outburst against Ranatunga.

May 16: Organisers order counties to review security arrangements after Australian captain Steve Waugh joins India's Mohammad Azharuddin in complaining about lack of crowd control.

May 17: Bangladesh schools and colleges are asked to suspend classes to allow students to watch the country's World Cup debut against New Zealand.

Warne makes an obscene gesture during the match against Scotland after a Scottish fan shouts: "You're having a nightmare, chubbey."

May 18: British high commissions quiz cricket fans from the Asian subcontinent on their knowledge of the game before granting them visas to attend the World Cup.

An anti-streptococcus squad is set up as part of security measures for England's match against Kenya. Organisers take the pre-emptive action following an increase in streptococcal at British sports events in recent years.

May 19: Sachin Tendulkar flies back to India following the death of his father but team officials say they are confident he will rejoin the team soon.

May 20: British bookmakers face major losses as bowlers in cricket's World Cup send down an avalanche of wickets. A leading firm says it had been forced to revise its estimated figure of 240-260 wickets in the competition up to 840-880. It expects to lose tens of thousands of pounds.

May 22: Jet-lagged Indian World Cup star Sachin Tendulkar returns to the nets just hours after returning to England, saying his deceased father would have wanted him back at the crease.

May 24: A cricket fan stabs an Indian shopkeeper to death for switching off his television during a World Cup match.

May 25: Gordon Greenidge, fresh from masterminding Bangladesh's first World Cup victory, says his team are not good enough for Test cricket. "We are miles away," he says.

May 26: An Australian punter bets 10,000 dollars (6,600 US) on Steve Waugh's team winning the World Cup at odds of 10-1.

West Indies coach Malcolm Marshall is in stable condition after surgery for cancer.

British army soldiers and Royal Navy sailors are called up to help with security arrangements to protect players during expected pitch invasions after the match between India and Sri Lanka.

May 27: Former batting great Vivian Richards agrees to help coach the West Indian World Cup squad in place of hospitalised Malcolm Marshall.

May 30: England batsman Andrew Flintoff appeals through the police after his bat is stolen during the game against India. It is not returned.

Indian troops fighting Moslem guerrillas in Kashmir listen to their side beating England on radio.

British police draft security plans to prepare for the politically sensitive meeting between Pakistan and India following clashes between Indian and Pakistani troops on the disputed Kashmir border.

Outgoing England coach David Lloyd blames his players for failing to perform during the World Cup. "We were not tough enough," he says.

May 31: Australia's deliberate slow play during their victory over the West Indies whips up a storm. Steve Waugh's decision to bat as slowly as possible to try and get New Zealand knocked out on run rate, thus helping Australia's own chances in the next phase, reduce the tournament to a farce, newspapers say.

The World Cup's official song is released 18 days after the start of the tournament. The recording reaches the shops 24 hours after hosts England are knocked out and fails to sell a single copy during the first day.

June 1: Skipper Brian Lara should not be blamed for the West Indies' early exit from the tournament, says manager Clive Lloyd.

Outgoing coach David Lloyd urges England to replace him with an Englishman, suggesting foreign coaches would not have the passion needed for the job.

Former Pakistani Test batsman Javed Miandad is expected