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## No hard feelings

HEADINGLEY, England, June 14: South Africa launched an emergency damage-limitation exercise here on Monday to try and rebuild Herschelle Gibbs' confidence after his amazing cricket World Cup blunder, reports AFP.

Gibbs' gaffe - he caught Australian captain Steve Waugh half-way through his match-winning innings of 120, but

then let the ball slip to the floor as he prematurely celebrated - not only lost South Africa the game on Sunday.

It also lost them the chance of an easy route to the final. Instead of playing Zimbabwe, they will now have to play Australia again in the semis on Thursday.

But while critics were blaming the 25-year-old from Cape Town - who had himself scored a century earlier in the game - for trying to show off as he took the catch, Hansie Cronje ruled the subject off limits.

He admitted after the last-over defeat that the incident had been "crucial" ... Steve Waugh is the man you want to get out in a run chase."

But nobody was looking back at the incident on Monday, with team officials making sure the young player did not brood over the incident.

Instead, they said that Cronje's side were already looking forward to the semi-final rematch with Australia at Edgbaston.

Cronje was stressing the positivity, saying: "You can't blame Gibbs. He had an injured finger, but he is valuable to us in the field and he wanted to stay on."

"Steve is a man you want to get out and the catch was crucial. But you can't blame Gibbs, it happens."

"He is still very valuable in the field and has done some great work in the past, these things happen, I'm not blaming everyone."

Former Australian captain Allan Border, however, was in no doubt that Gibbs - regarded as one of the best fielders in the world - had blundered.

"He was showboating a little bit and he's paid the penalty. I

Kallis will be back

HEADINGLEY, England, June 14: Key all-rounder Jacques Kallis looks certain to return to the South African team for their cricket World Cup semifinal against Australia at Edgbaston on Thursday, reports AFP.

Kallis, struggling with a stomach muscle injury, was not risked on Sunday, but team officials were confident today that he would be fit to return for the rematch against Steve Waugh.

Kallis is a key man to the South African effort, opening the bowling and batting at number three.

Against Australia, skipper Hansie Cronje and left-arm spinner Nicky Boje had to share the 10 overs normally bowled by Kallis. They conceded 79 between them without taking a wicket as Australia won by five wickets with two balls to spare.

Cronje said: "When you lose Jacques, you lose two cricketers - a batsman and a bowler. It's very difficult to replace him. At halfway, we thought it was defendable total. As soon as the fifth bowler came on, it released all the pressure."

don't think he will be doing it again," Border said.

Waugh himself, meanwhile, was in no mood to offer words of comfort to Gibbs. Asked if the incident had been crucial, he said: "Who cares? We won."

Cronje, in a superb piece of captaincy - and perhaps humanity - had realised the gravity of Gibbs' situation in a flash on Sunday.

Gibbs, in his fashionable wrap-around shades, was clearly trying to pose by flicking the ball dismissively over his shoulder after the catch. He had done just the same - successfully - in the previous game against New Zealand.

At the end of the over following his missed catch on Sunday, Gibbs made a move towards his captain but Cronje, with a gesture of the hands, tried to smooth the incident straight out of his young protege's mind, as if it had never happened.

He knew immediately that the young opening batsman, who has scored 91 and 101 in his last two innings, will have a crucial role to play in the rematch.

### Bell recalled

WELLINGTON, June 14: New Zealand opening batsman Matthew Bell returned to the Test squad today, named to join the four-Test series in England after the World Cup, reports Reuters.

Bell, who's been kept out of the New Zealand team since March by a viral infection, is one of four players called up for the Test series while three of the World Cup squad will return home.

Convenor of selectors Ross Dykes said it was likely that Bell would partner Matthew Horne to open the innings with Nathan Astle dropping down the order.

The top order batsmen have struggled during the World Cup," Dykes said in a statement.

"We initially selected Matthew last season as an opening batsman. Unfortunately illness prevented him taking his opportunity, however, the selectors still believe he has the talent and potential to play international cricket in the opening role."

Gavin Larsen has been dropped from the Tests, in keeping with the New Zealand team management's view of him as a one-day specialist.

Also let go are Matthew Hart and Carl Bulfin - both of whom have had little cricket during the World Cup and were considered surprise selections in the squad.

Seam bowler Shayne O'Connor has been called back into the 16-man test squad while two new caps were named in right-arm leg spin bowler Brooke Walker and wicket keeper Marty Croy.

**NEW ZEALAND:** Stephen Fleming (captain), Geoff Allott, Nathan Astle, Matthew Bell, Chris Cairns, Martyn Croy, Simon Doull, Chris Harris, Matthew Horne, Craig McLellan, Dion Nash, Shayne O'Connor, Adam Parore, Roger Twose, Daniel Vettori, Brooke Walker.

In Neil Johnson, Zimbabwe unearthed one of the finds of the tournament.

The 29-year-old all-rounder scored 76 runs and took three wickets against South Africa - the country which rejected him before he switched to Zimbabwe.

He also became the first Zimbabwean to make a century at Lord's when scoring 132 not out against Australia.

It was announced this month that they are due to be given their first cricket Test tour of Australia in the summer of 2000/01.

### WORLD CUP AVERAGES

LONDON, June 14 (AFP): Leading batting and bowling averages of the World Cup after the final Super Six match on Sunday:

Player	M	I	NO	R	HS	Avg	100s	50s
L Klusener (RSA)	8	7	5	250	52no	125.00	0	2
R Jacobs (WI)	5	4	2	205	80no	102.50	0	2
R Twoze (NZ)	8	8	5	272	80no	90.66	0	3
S Waugh (AUS)	8	7	3	342	120no	85.50	1	1
M Abedin (BAN)	4	4	2	140	68no	70.00	0	2
S Chanderpaul (WI)	5	4	2	134	77	67.00	0	1
R Dravid (IND)	8	8	1	461	145	65.85	2	3
N Hussain (ENG)	5	5	2	194	88no	64.66	0	2
G Hamilton (SCO)	5	5	1	217	76	54.25	0	2
S Ganguly (IND)	7	7	0	379	183	54.14	1	1

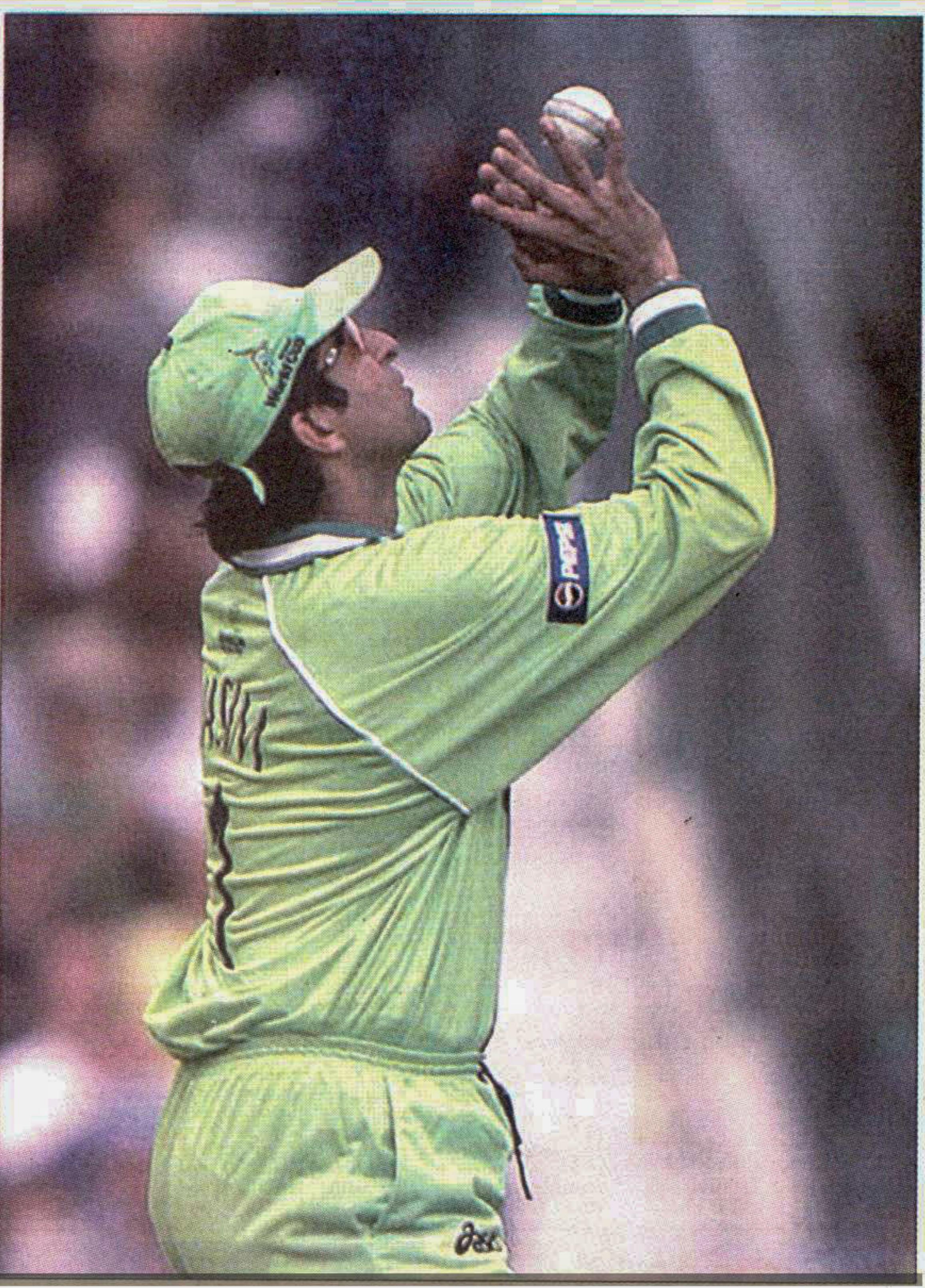
Player	O	M	R	W	Avg	Swkt	BB
C Walsh (WI)	47	8	108	11	9.81	0	4-25
R King (WI)	31.3	4	95	8	11.87	0	3-30
C Ambrose (WI)	40	5	94	7	13.42	0	3-31
G Allott (NZ)	78.4	7	284	20	14.20	0	4-37
D Gough (ENG)	48.4	4	192	11	17.45	0	4-34
M Dillon (WI)	36.5	2	140	8	17.50	0	4-46
A Mullally (ENG)	50	6	176	0	17.60	0	4-37
L Klusener (RSA)	66.5	4	300	17	17.64	1	5-21
Waqar Younis (PAK)	9	1	36	2	18.00	0	2-36
M Elaham (ENG)	50	5	191	10	19.10	0	2-28

### SUPER SIX STANDINGS

LONDON, June 14 (AFP): Cricket World Cup Super Six table after Sunday's final second-round match:

Team	P	W	L	T	NR	Pts	NRR
Pakistan	5	3	2	0	0	6	+0.65
Australia	5	3	2	0	0	6	+0.36
South Africa	5	3	2	0	0	6	+0.17
New Zealand	5	2	2	0	1	5	-0.52
Zimbabwe	5	2	2	0	1	5	-0.79
India	5	1	4	0	0	2	-0.15

Table includes team points and results retained from first round (\*denotes semifinalists).



Wasim Akram has got just two more big catches to grasp. — Star file photo

## Super yet suspect

LONDON, June 14 (Reuters/Internet): Zimbabwe's cricketers sat in a London hotel over the weekend with their World Cup fate hanging in the balance.

A place in the semifinals was tantalisingly close but it rested on the outcome of the last two Super Six second-round matches.

As Zimbabwe captain Alastair Campbell remarked before their two-day wait they had "two bites at the cherry", needing either India to beat New Zealand on Saturday or South Africa to beat Australia on Sunday.

In the event, wins for New Zealand and Australia in a compelling Super Six finale ended Zimbabwe's dream of reaching the last four for the first time. Those results also avoided an unlikely semifinalist because of an anomaly in the tournament's new format.

Had Zimbabwe gone through to the semifinals they would have done so without winning a Super Six game. They lost to Australia and Pakistan and had a washed-out encounter with New Zealand from which they took one point.

Even if they had not beaten South Africa on Sunday the Australians would have had two wins out of three in the Super Six and success at this more demanding stage must ultimately decide if a team progresses to the semifinals.

Moreover, the system under which teams carried forward to the Super Six the points gained against fellow group qualifiers also assumed an inflated importance.

While rewarding sides for consistently winning group games, it meant a team who brought forward the maximum

four points could almost certainly get into the semifinals by winning only once in the Super Six round.

The concept of the Super Sixes was worthy in that it ensured the top three teams from the two first-round groups played each other, and was neatly staged during a 10-day period, but overall performance in this phase needed to be more significant.

The fairest format was at the 1992 tournament in Australia and New Zealand where all the nine teams played each other on a round-robin basis and the top four qualified for the semi-finals.

However, with 12 sides now involved that system would produce an unwieldy number of

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### Pakistan made favourites for World Cup

LONDON, June 14 (Reuters/Internet): Pakistan are 13-8 favourites to win the World Cup following the completion of the Super Six second phase of the tournament on Sunday.

Bookmakers William Hill make South Africa and Australia, who meet in the second semifinal on Thursday at Edgbaston, joint second favourites at 11-5. New Zealand, who play Pakistan in the first semifinal on Wednesday at Old Trafford, are 15-2 outsiders.

**LATEST ODDS**  
13-8 Pakistan  
11-5 Australia, South Africa  
15-2 New Zealand



JOHNSON STOOD A CLASS APART: Zimbabwe all-rounder Neil Johnson was one of the hottest commodities of the World Cup. — Star file photo

GALLANT GIBBS: South African opener Herschelle Gibbs whacks are towards long on during his superb century on June 13. — AFP photo

LONDON, June 14: Zimbabwe coach David Houghton at last praised his cricket World Cup squad here on Monday - then told them they only had themselves to blame for missing out on the semi-finals, reports AFP.

Houghton, who earlier in the tournament accused his squad of playing "schoolboy cricket" and of "choking" under pressure, said: "We did ourselves proud at times."

"We won't be going home firing our captain or manager or anybody else."

But he said the team had failed to take advantage of their first-round victories over India and South Africa - one of the greatest shocks in World Cup history - during the second round on Sunday.

Australia's dramatic last-over win, however, meant the African side missed out on run rate to New Zealand.

Houghton said: "It was in our hands and we didn't take it. It was a bit much, asking others to do it for us."

Skipper Alastair Campbell added: "Getting through on run rate isn't the way to do it. We need to win one more game to get there on merit."

But he echoed Houghton, saying: "The guys can be pretty proud of what they did."

Zimbabwe, a solid team but short on star quality, came to the World Cup with three wins in their previous 25 World Cup games.