



WORLD CUP '99 Special

DHAKA WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 1999 Email: dssports@bdonline.com



Spin doctor Saqlain, spinning his way to the top.

Breaking Boundaries.



MORE THAN YOU THOUGHT POSSIBLE

Grey, green and white suit Allott

LONDON, June 15 (Reuters/Internet): Grey skies, green pitches and white balls. It is a familiar World Cup mosaic with particular significance for an affable New Zealand fast bowler.

For all Roger Twose's tenacity and Gavin Larsen's parsimony, Geoff Allott is the reason New Zealand have advanced to this week's semifinals at the expense of more highly rated sides.

With 20 wickets to his name, Allott has dismissed more batsmen during the tournament than any other bowler in the seven World Cups to date.

He has regularly dismissed both opposing opening batsmen and his late-in-swinging yorker has become a potent weapon.

Bowling lively, left-arm from over the wicket Allott has made the white Duke ball lift and seam from pitches containing a bit of moisture.

Yet two years ago Allott was overweight, injured and out of favour after sustaining two stress fractures in his back as a result of an unnatural delivery stride.

Dayle Hadlee, older brother of Richard and a fine pace bowler in his own right, took on the challenge of remodelling

Allott's action.

As Hadlee explains Allott's legs were coming through front-on and his body side-on.

Injuries were inevitable so

Hadlee, head of the New Zealand Cricket Academy, and technical director Ashley Ross set about reinventing Allott's approach and delivery.

"Geoff had to go through the long process of starting to bowl from scratch again, literally one step at a time," Hadlee said.

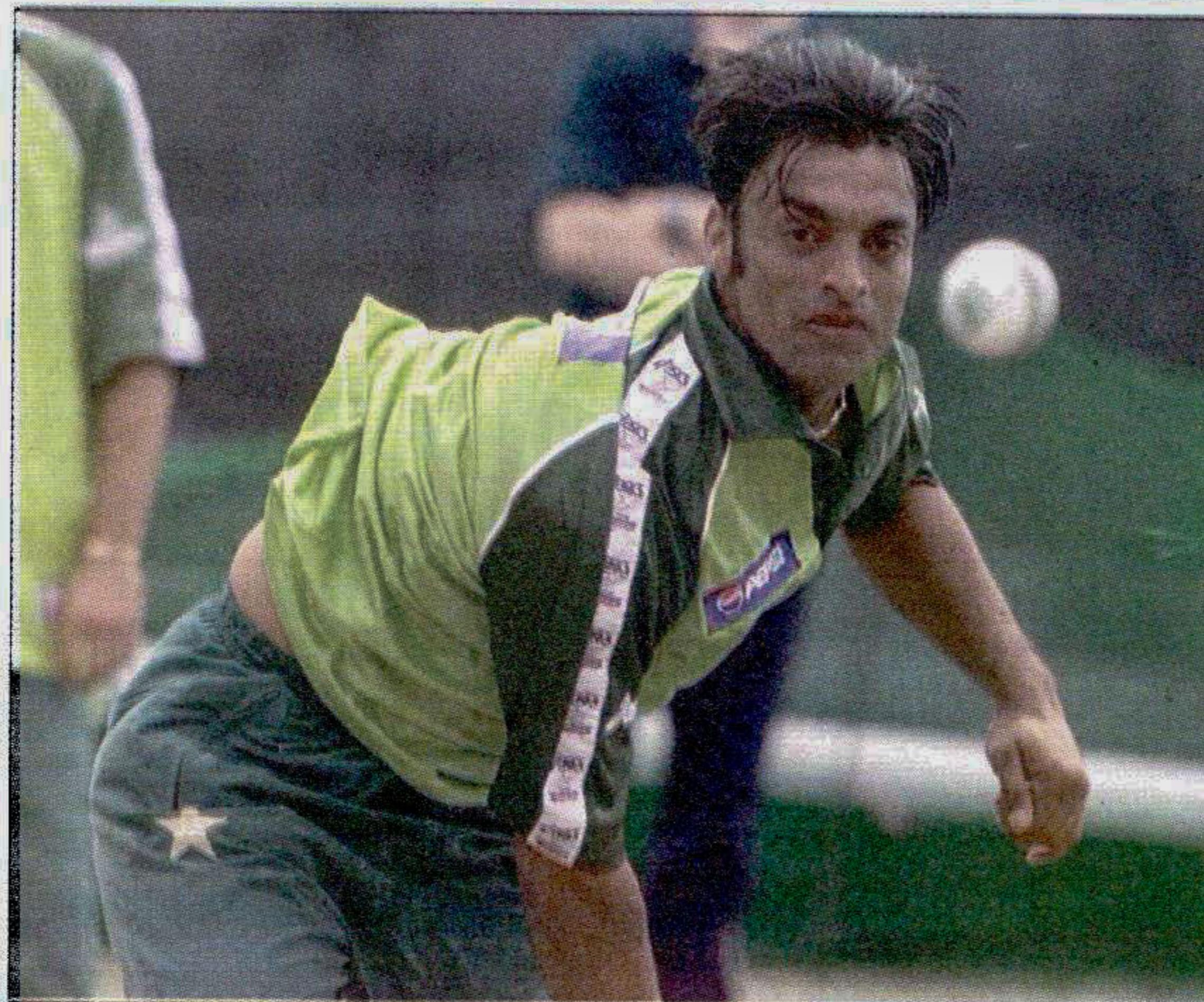
"It took a huge amount of effort for him but it said a lot about his character that he was prepared to work at it and have the inner confidence that he could come back."

Allott lost weight, started bowling with a more side-on action, experimented with an unusual grip in which he puts three fingers instead of two on top of the seam and discovered he could move the ball back into the batsmen.

"Allott can now bowl regularly in-swing to right-handers, the key to a left-arter taking the step up from good to very good performers," said Richard Hadlee, the first bowler in history to take 400 test wickets.

As one of cricket's natural number eleven, Allott's grit and

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SPEED DEMON: Shoaib Akhtar, the Pakistan fast bowler sending down a delivery.

—AFP photo

Rixon rather relaxed

MANCHESTER, June 15 (AP): New Zealand coach Steve Rixon isn't priming the Black Caps for a David vs. Goliath battle against Pakistan in Wednesday's World Cup semifinal.

He's convinced his unfancied team can upset the Pakistani title contenders by challenging the narrow parameters of the limited-overs game.

New Zealand's bid to qualify for their first World Cup final in seven attempts goes on the line against Pakistan, the 1992 champions.

While Pakistan have recovered from successive losses to minnows Bangladesh, South Africa and Asian arch-rivals India, with a comprehensive thrashing of Zimbabwe at The Oval last Friday.

Rixon said the Kiwis were capable of beating Pakistan and winning the World Cup.

Having hovered around the odds of 20-1 and beaten Australia and India on their way, New Zealand stand in the threshold of international glory.

Rixon, the former Australian wicketkeeper whose three year coaching stint ends following a post-World Cup Test series against England, said he senses a breakthrough.

"This is not David and Goliath," Rixon said. "I go in with full expectations of winning the game."

"In the past that might have been through blind faith but I go past that now and say we are a very good cricket side."

"(We're) in very good shape at the moment. A pass mark for us is winning the tournament."

Kiwi skipper Stephen Fleming says he isn't intimidated by the multitalented Pakistan side. Instead, he's planning to use the volatile temperament of the Pakistanis to his advantage.

"We're relishing the underdog status," Fleming said of Pakistan's favourite status. "Internally we are very determined

to do well and we have been for the last 18 months."

With the return to form of opener Matt Horne, the Kiwis have batting strength down to Adam Parore at No. 8.

Rixon said New Zealand's

That could be down to pressure or just how they perform on the day.

"We're wary of their ability but the expectations of their public are a lot higher and it

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Unpredictables v Underachievers

OLD TRAFFORD, England, June 15: Wasim Akram will not be short of support or inspiration when he leads Pakistan out for their cricket World Cup semifinal against New Zealand here on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old returns to the venue where he served English county side Lancashire with distinction for more than a decade, reports AFP.

His ultimate goal is to emulate his mentor Imran Khan's World Cup triumph in 1992.

Two wins away from my

best. That could be down to pressure or just how they perform on the day.

We are obviously wary of

their ability but the expectations of their public on their team are a lot higher throughout the competition than ours and it could come down to who handles the pressure better."

Bookmakers quote New Zealand, who have reached three previous semifinals without making the final, at 15-2 outsiders, but Fleming was not concerned by his team's under-

achievements.

First, his team lost to Bangladesh, then he described last week's encounter against India as a "practise match before the crunch games to come" only to find egg all over his face as Mohammad Azharuddin's men won by 47 runs.

Pakistan coach Mushtaq

Mohammad invited accusa-

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dream, I don't want to let anything get in the way," said Akram.

"We will go one at a time -- but I am determined to be there on the Lord's balcony on Sunday, hopefully with the Cup."

Kiwi skipper Stephen Fleming, however, said his side were just as pleased with the match-up as their opponents.

"We were quite happy getting

Pakistan because they can fluctuate much more than South Africa and Australia," he said.

"Pakistan can be absolutely brilliant but there are other times when they are not at their

dog status. The underdog tag is all external ... internally we are very determined to do well and we have been for the last 18 months.

There's been nothing lucky about our campaign. We've played some reasonable cricket and scrapped and played well at important times.

"We may not have looked convincing all the way through but at the important times we have really dug deep and done things well. We take heart from

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Jones would love nothing better

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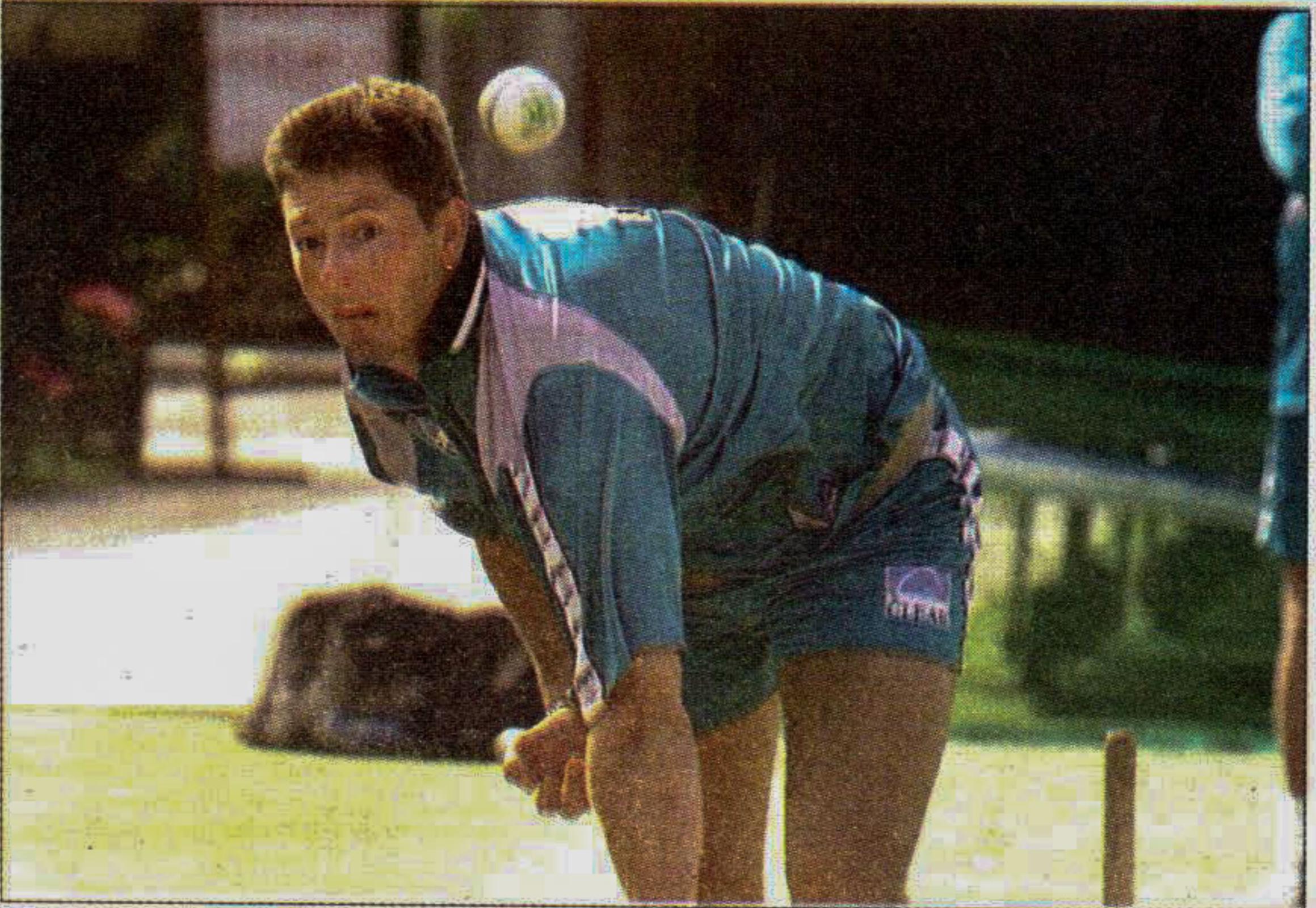


"They haven't really fired a lot of shots to get this far."

Jones said Dion Nash and Chris Cairns would both need to bowl faster.

"They...need to hit the splice and give the batsmen less time."

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BOWLER OF THE MOMENT: New Zealand's and the tournament's premier paceman Geoff Allott sharpening his trade during practice.

—AFP photo

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London, June 15 (AP): English newspapers were loaded Monday with a story about the one that got away.

While the England cricket team was still reeling after its first-round elimination from the World Cup, a player who was shunned by England selectors was ensuring New Zealand's progress to the final four.

Roger Twose, who played seven seasons with Warwickshire in the English country competition, never figured in calculations for the English team.

The Devon-born batsman is New Zealand's leading scorer in this campaign and his unbeaten 60 against India on Saturday ensured his adopted land qualified for the semifinals.

He also helped the Kiwis to an upset win over trans-Tasman rivals Australia with an unbeaten 80 in a group game.

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