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Kallis' stomach may upset SA

LONDON, June 16 (Internet report): South Africa's key all-rounder Jacques Kallis was still waging a fitness battle today - just 24 hours before the World Cup semi-final against Australia at Edgbaston.

But South Africa's physiotherapist Craig Smith has advised captain Hansie Cronje and coach Bob Woolmer that it would be a risk to play Kallis, who has a stomach strain, as there is a chance of him breaking down.

With Smith's verdict downbeat, and Woolmer rating his chances as "50-50", a decision on Kallis is likely to be taken at the last possible moment.

The importance of the match is bound to come into the calculations, but if South Africa reach Sunday's final and Kallis aggravates the strain in the semi-final, he could miss the Lord's showpiece.

Cronje and Woolmer are thus left with a delicate decision to make - Kallis' injury forced him out of Sunday's epic against Australia at Headingley, and South Africa missed his dual contribution as new ball bowler and middle-order stroke-maker.

Kallis was in gentle mode when he began a bowling session at Edgbaston today, and gradually worked up his pace and follow through - but the workout lasted only 15 minutes.

Smith said: "Jacques is still in some degree of pain, he's been improving on a day-by-day basis. The real proof of the pudding is him bowling, and we bowled out there for ten minutes and it's still pretty painful."

The decision for him to play is in the hands of the selectors.

"It happened in the match against New Zealand last week. He bowled six overs and from the fourth, he started noticing what he described as a crampy spasm in his stomach and it progressively got worse."

"Unfortunately the stomach musculature is so important for the strength of the whole body. It's crucial in the action of bowling and it's not completely healed yet."

"He's been having daily treatment, we went for a scan on Monday and the signs of the scan were pretty optimistic."

It all depends whether he feels he can bowl 20 overs in two matches, and that is the

See page 14



Wasim Akram (C) being congratulated by Wajahatullah Wasti (L) and Ijaz Ahmed after getting rid of Craig McMillan yesterday.

BITS & PIECES

BIRMINGHAM, June 16 (AP): If Australia win the World Cup, it will be all-rounder Tom Moody's second 'world title' on British soil.

Moody, who is preparing with his team for the semi-final here against South Africa, revealed that during Australia's 1989 tour of England he captured sport's least prestigious world title - champion haggis thrower.

The Scottish sport, which is a bit of an oddity even in Scotland, is something like hammerthrow, except that the athlete perched on a barrel hurls a bag filled with sheep intestine.

"I remember the haggis being about the shape of an oversized light bulb, but pretty heavy," said Moody, who stands 210 centimetres (6 feet 7 inches).

"I threw it like an American football quarterback and it sailed into the car park for a world record," he said.

Moody said he and his teammates were taking part in a mini-Highland games and the main event was the haggis

See page 14

Step aside Lance, Tom is here

EDGBASTON, England, June 16: If South African cricket World Cup star Lance Klusener glances into his rear-view mirror here on Thursday, he may just spot a distant but growing speck appearing in his slipstream, reports AFP.

The turbo-charged all-rounder has caused a sensation at the tournament by scoring 214 high-speed runs before he lost his wicket for the first

400 one-day runs since the last time he trudged back to the pavilion.

Australia's veteran all-rounder Tom Moody, however, has been quietly building an unbeaten run of his own.

Ignored by the selectors for the first three World Cup games, he has since had four innings without losing his wicket, scoring 117 runs.

Klusener's current average is 125. Moody's is infinity, having not been dismissed.

The Australian already owns one world record.

One a cricket tour to Britain 10 years ago, he visited the Highland Games in Scotland, where bizarre sports like tossing the caber - a tree trunk - and hurling the haggis - a Scottish delicacy made of minced sheep's meat - are practised.

The 6ft 7ins Moody threw the haggis into the car park to break the existing record.

One a cricket tour to Britain at number seven, which saved his side from imminent disaster against Sri Lanka, England and Pakistan, have earned him four man-of-the-match awards.

Yet Moody's runs have been scored at an even faster rate.

Also coming in at number seven, the Western Australia and Worcestershire skipper has made less headlines because he has scored 20s and 30s to

Klusener's 40s and 50s.

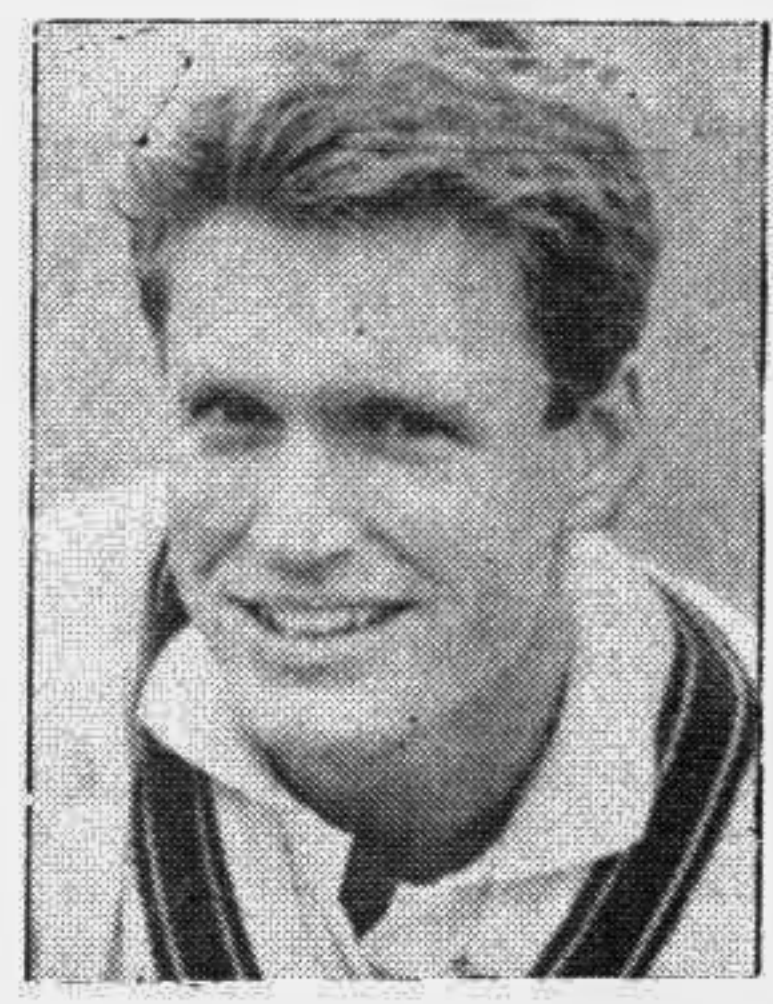
But Moody has the higher score here, 56 not out, to the South African's 52 not out. Moody hit those runs off a World Cup record 29 balls against Bangladesh.

The Australian almost missed the World Cup after being left out of the provisional 19-man squad, only to be recalled at the last minute.

Moody and Steve Waugh are



LANCE KLUSENER
time
His dismissal by New Zealand's Gavin Larsen also gave Klusener a world record of



TOM MOODY
the only survivors of Australia's victorious 1987 World Cup squad. Moody, however, did not play in the final.

Warne wary of 'Zulu'

EDGBASTON, England, June 16: Australian leg spinner Shane Warne goes into Thursday's World Cup semi-final against South Africa knowing the key lies in containing the Lance Klusener, the star of the tournament, reports AFP.

But, Warne admitted, the problem lay in finding the right key.

"Klusener has been player of the tournament by a country mile," Warne wrote in the Times on Wednesday.

"Our plan on Sunday was to go around the wicket and aim to bowl yorkers outside the off-stump to stop him hitting in his favourite area through the leg-side."

The plan, Warne said, "half-worked" because the left-handed Klusener blasted 36 off 21 balls in the second-round clash at Headingley.

Australia won the match with two balls to spare following a magnificent 120 not out by skipper Steve Waugh.

Warne, who had finished his spell by the time Klusener came to the crease, said Australia will have to come up with another plan for the semi-final.

"But plans have to go out of the window when you are bowling to someone like him at the death," he said.

Klusener has only been dis-

missed twice in the tournament while hitting 250 runs. He also has 17 wickets, the second highest behind Geoff Allott of New Zealand (20).

His efforts have earned Klusener four man-of-the-match awards, and he remains

Africa will be "another humdinger."

"They know we've got the wood on them and I don't think they know why," he said.

"I reckon their best hope is

See page 14

Viv for drastic changes

LONDON, June 16: Former West Indies captain Viv Richards said half the current team would be dropped if he had his way, reports Reuters.

Richards, who took over as West Indies coach during the World Cup when Malcolm Marshall was taken ill, told BBC radio on Tuesday: "I personally believe that we need a complete change, a complete shake up. Half would go."

Richards believes too many players fail to demonstrate enough pride and spirit to lift the team.

"Individuals today do not quite realise what cricket means to the Caribbean people and until they start to realise that they should take a back seat," said Richards who led West Indies in 50 Tests between 1985 and 1991.



JUST TOO GOOD: Shoaib Akhtar is over the moon after knocking over New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming's leg stump with a deadly yorker.

Perfect day for cricket

From Nizamuddin Ahmed

OLD TRAFFORD, JUNE 16: Ijaz Ahmed's brilliant catch at gully to see the back of danger-man Roger Twose and Shoaib Akhtar's gem of a yorker to send the wickets skittling behind Stephen Fleming put Pakistan on top on a bright and sunny day at Old Trafford.

Although there were still the prospect of late afternoon showers, conditions were perfect for cricket, only too perfect for Pakistan. Warm, sunny and dry for Wasim Akram and his battery of pacemen to unnervingly the New Zealanders. Nature, as it seemed, was on Wasim's side; at least to begin with.

The Pakistan fans were in full cry. Many were in their team colours, as were some English and Bangladeshi fans. But for the stray New Zealand flags and the appreciative applause of the neutrals to Mathew Horne's academically consummate shots, the gallery belonged to the noisy and boisterous Pakistanis. It was a day they had come to enjoy for that was what their captain ordered.

"I want the boys to go and enjoy the semi-final," said Wasim on the eve of the match.

Stephen Fleming won the vital toss and understandably opted to bat to take advantage of Pakistan's suspect ability to chase. Bangladesh and India

must have been on the mind of the New Zealand captain.

Wasim Akram did say that the three consecutive defeats, including the one against South Africa, "was a matter of the past". And so it appeared, as New Zealand, devoid of any flamboyant batting, meandered past 200 with barely five overs to go.

The wicket was well-baked from two days of beating from a generous sun.

There was the early bounce. Only Nathan Astle, victim to the one that kept low, may disagree in contempt.

The New Zealand openers did not know for quite a while what went past them as skipper Wasim Akram and his talented disciple Shoaib Akhtar let loose a barrel of scorers. At 58 for three, the New Zealand scorecard was not entirely truthful about the number of times they were beaten and of the runs that came from accidental brush of the bat.

After the initial excitement of wickets tumbling in the first fifteen overs, there was a lull in the game for the next fifteen. Rightly, Wasim brought back Shoaib Akhtar in the 32nd over. The excitement was back. The Pakistani speedster was timing in the nineties and the

See page 14

Low on confidence

JOHANNESBURG, June 16: South Africans were unusually downbeat about their World Cup chances today, a day ahead of their semifinal against Australia, reports Reuters.

Normally, the newspapers in this sports mad country would be nearly as full on their front pages as their back ones with coverage of their national squad only two victories away from becoming world champions.

But the defeat by Australia on Sunday in the final Super Six match has left many despondent about their chances and coverage of the World Cup was all but missing from the news sections of the papers.

They concentrated attention on the inauguration of President Thabo Mbeki, closely followed by the nation's farewell to his predecessor Nelson Mandela, and then by a celebratory soccer match between South Africa and Zimbabwe and the Comrades Marathon.

The other World Cup semi-final, between Pakistan and New

Zealand on Wednesday, was given only scant attention, even though the winners would meet South Africa should they overcome Australia.

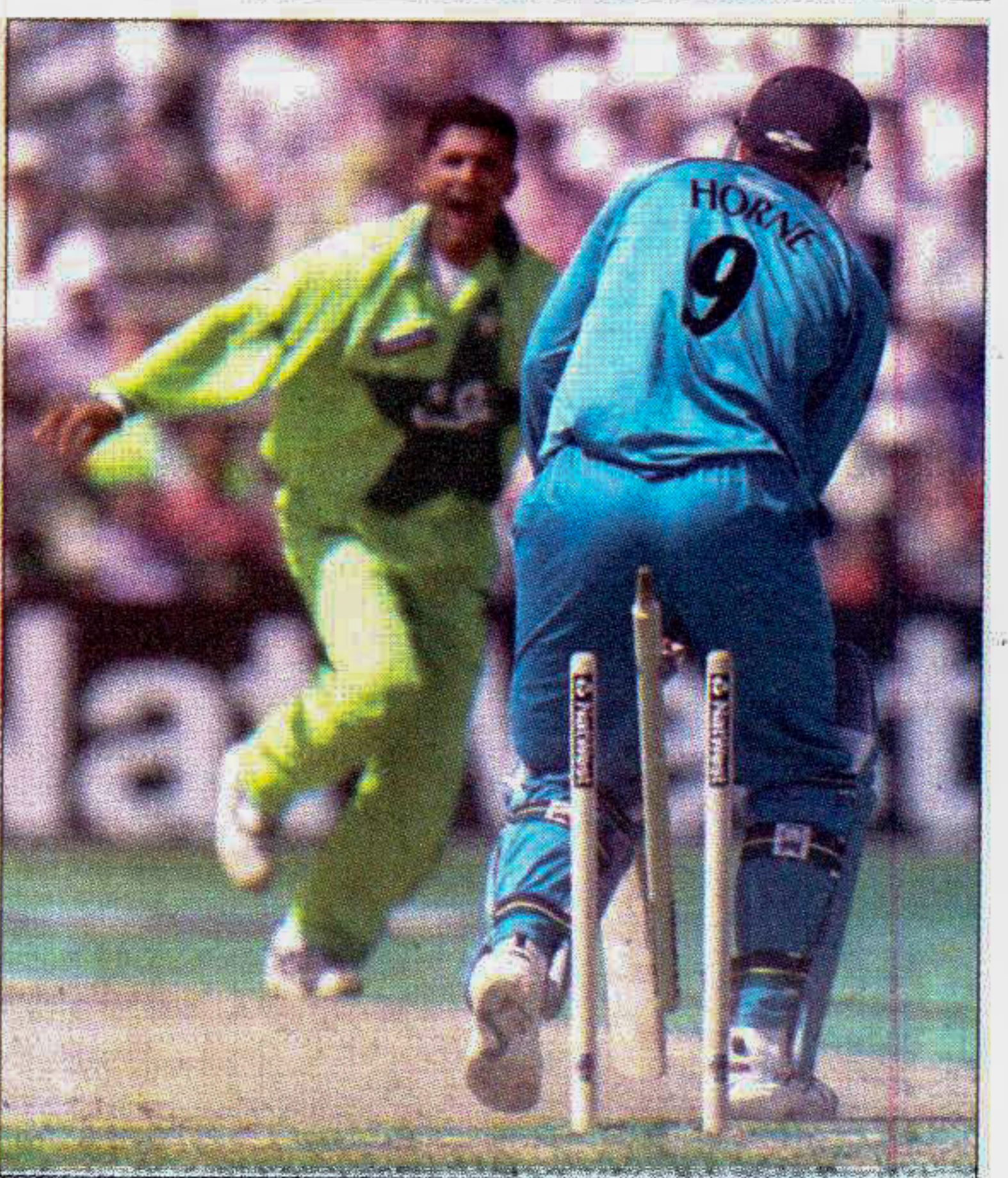
"They're not going to do it now, are they," a fan asked forlornly in the wake of South Africa's gripping five-wicket defeat by Australia last Sunday.

South Africans saw their team of supreme fighters out-battled by Steve Waugh and his men who recovered from the dire position of 48 for three to reach the target of 272 with two balls to spare.

The turning point of that match came when Herschelle Gibbs botched a simple catch which would have had Waugh dismissed for 56. Instead, the Australian captain played an epic innings of 120 not out.

Until then South Africa had prided themselves as being the team able to fight back from impossible situations to win. Now they were on the receiving end and, to make it worse, from the team they most enjoy beating.

See page 14



YOU BEAUTY: New Zealand opener Mathew Horne's middle stump is uprooted by a superb delivery from Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar.



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