

No cricket in 2002 C'wealth Games

WELLINGTON, July 20: Organisers of the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester plan to drop one-day cricket but rugby sevens, hockey and netball will remain, the New Zealand Olympic Committee said today, reports Reuters.

Organisers have finalised a list of 14 individual sports and three team sports they planned to host. New Zealand Olympic Committee chief executive Michael Hooper said in a statement on his return from a fact-finding mission to Manchester.

Formal decisions on the sports to be included in the games are not due to be made by the general assembly of the Commonwealth Games Federation until October.

"One-day cricket has been excluded from the programme... but judo, table tennis, triathlon and wrestling have been added," said the committee, which also handles Commonwealth Games matters in New Zealand.

The team sports made their debut at last year's Kuala Lumpur Games, although netball had been a demonstration sport at the Auckland Games in 1990.

South Africa took the cricket gold medal but the matches were not officially recognised by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

The ICC has suggested an eight-a-side short version of the one-day game be played in Manchester.

At one stage, the Manchester organisers had suggested only one team sport be hosted there — netball.

Despite dropping cricket, Hooper said the addition of other individual sports would make Manchester the biggest Commonwealth Games ever.

He said the individual sports are aquatics (swimming, diving, synchronised), athletics, badminton, boxing, cycling, gymnastics, judo, lawn bowls, shooting, squash, table tennis, triathlon, weightlifting and wrestling.

Beijing Marathon in October

BEIJING, July 20: The Beijing International Marathon, billed as one of the 10 largest marathons in the world, will be held here on October 8, reports AFP.

The marathon, inaugurated in 1981, will set off from central Tiananmen Square and weave its way west along the Avenue of Eternal Peace (Chang'an Jie), Yuetan Park, and the Diaoyutai Guesthouse before ending at the Olympic Stadium.

Shang Xiutang, General Secretary of the Chinese Athletics Association, said he expected over 20,000 runners to take part in the race.

The deadline for registration is August 31.

France's Davis Cup semifinal at Pau

PARIS, July 20: Pau was chosen as the venue for the France versus Belgium Davis Cup semifinal from September 24-26, the French Tennis Federation said on Monday, reports AFP.

It will be held in the same Pau stadium in which they beat Brazil 3-2 at the weekend in the quarterfinals. France won the Davis Cup in 1991 after playing the semifinal at Pau.

Sydney braces for big crowds

SYDNEY, June 20: Central Sydney will become the "party capital of the world" with an estimated 8.2 million visitors expected during the 2000 Olympic Games, Australia's Olympics minister, Michael Knight, said today, reports Reuters.

In announcing how Sydney, a city with a population of about four million, would cope with an additional 8,000,000 visitors to its central business district (CBD) each day, Knight warned "the city will need to change to cope with massive crowd movements".

Knight released two booklets explaining how Sydney will celebrate and cope with the Olympics in September 2000. City trains will run 24 hours a day during the Games, streets will be closed to traffic to create pedestrian corridors, casual parking will be removed, and city shops and food halls will stay open until 11:00 pm.

Giant video screens will be erected in the CBD to relay live coverage from Olympic venues as well as visitor information. Improved harbour walkways will allow uninterrupted walks around the Sydney Harbour Bridge and the Opera House. "We're not going to pretend that the city won't be congested and it won't be difficult, but it's also going to be a very exciting time and we're determined to minimise the disruption and maximise the enjoyment," Knight said.

"The Olympic city will earn the title of party capital of the world as an estimated collective 8.2 million people flock to the CBD to celebrate and soak up the atmosphere," he said.

Olympic officials today also suggested city businesses not involved in the Games should allow people flexible working hours to avoid travelling during peak times.

Such compromise is essential to enable central Sydney to revel in the Olympic spirit, he said, also to continue to operate effectively," said David Richmond, head of the Olympic Coordination Authority, which is building Games infrastructure.

Stand-still at PCB



ISLAMABAD, July 20: Efforts to put up an alternative management for the suspended Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has been expedited amid reports that top cricket administrators like Arif Abbasi, Majid Khan and Shahid Rafiq would make a comeback into the country's cricket setup, reports PTL.

Mujibur Rehman, the newly-appointed PCB ad-hoc committee chairman, is reportedly cutting short his visit to Qatar and rushing home tomorrow and expected to immediately get down to constituting his team within a few days.

Javed Zaman Khan, the other panel member, today visited the PCB headquarters at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore and held discussions with Waqar Ahmed, outgoing secretary.

This was the first activity at PCB headquarters since the board was suspended by Pakistan President Muhammad Rafiq Tarar on Friday night amidst severe criticism and allegations of match fixing

against the national team following their abysmal defeat to Australia in the World Cup final.

The PCB offices have been closed down till Rehman's arrival. The President, who is PCB's chief patron, has authorised Rehman to pick three or four persons to the committee to run the board.

Javed Zaman during his meeting was briefed by Waqar Ahmed about the follow up action taken in the wake of suspension of the entire PCB management, including chairman Khalid Mahmood.

Javed Zaman, has refrained from reaching to comments by Mahmood against the PCB's suspension. "Khalid is my close friend and I have great respect for him. I would not like to make any comment on his statement," he said.

According to information available here, the names of a number of well-known cricket administrators are being mentioned for inclusion in the ad-hoc committee.

Majid Khan, former Pakistan skipper and cousin of Imran Khan, is considered a close

friend of Mujibur Rehman, who has virtually no experience of playing cricket even at the first class level.

Arif Abbasi has been included in the ad-hoc committee when former President Farooq Leghari suspended PCB in 1994.

Mujibur Rehman is expected to visit the PCB office on Wednesday to take stock of things himself.

Rehman has been quoted as saying by the media here that he wants to run the PCB affairs like a multinational company where only professionals will be included to run the show.

Speaking from Doha, Rehman, who heads the Redco Business Group which has close links with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Ittefaq Group, said his first task was to restore reputation of the Pakistan team and resolve the current crises through legal means.

He said qualifying for the World Cup final was a big achievement for the Pakistan team, but warned that if the loss in the final was deliberate strong action would be taken against anyone involved.

Taylor against two teams



SYDNEY, July 20: Former captain Mark Taylor said Tuesday Australia's World Cup cricket triumph did not justify the decision to select separate Test and limited-overs teams, reports AFP.

Taylor, who retired from international cricket earlier this year, said he hoped the two national teams would come closer together.

He said Australia had gone "reasonably well" under his successor Steve Waugh.

Left-handed opening batsman Taylor retired from all first-class cricket at the end of last summer but lost the Australian limited-overs captaincy to Waugh at the start of the 1997-98 season when the Australian Cricket Board (ACB) opted for separate Test and one-day sides.

Taylor pointed out it was established Test stars and match winners rather than limited-overs specialists who had been the major contributors to Australia's World Cup triumph in

England last month. Asked whether the victory justified the ACB's controversial policy of opting for separate Test and limited-overs teams, Taylor replied: "No."

"If you look at the World Cup final sides in 1996 and 1999 there were only three different players, so really we had pretty well the same side as three years ago, so I still don't believe that's the right way to go," he said.

"I'm very hopeful that in Australian cricket we will get the two sides closer together in years to come."

"I'm still a great believer in the team environment, that's something I tried very hard as a captain to instill in all my players, when I played to put the team first."

"I don't think when you have leaders of the team who are different for the one-dayers to the Test matches you can get that system working at its best."

"If you look at the World Cup, we played very well, we got ourselves out of a bind early on, but it was our senior players who got us through."

Since Waugh assumed the Test captaincy, Australia drew 2-2 with the West Indies in the Caribbean and won the World Cup.



MARK TAYLOR

Kiwis in good mood



LONDON, July 20 (Internet report): New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming insists his team are in good shape ahead of Thursday's second Test against England at Lord's.

Fleming endured a long day in the field at Canterbury yesterday along with the rest of his side, but said: "We are pleased with our preparation. We are in good mood but that doesn't win Test matches."

"We have got to be really focused on the job but we are all looking forward to the Lord's Test because it will be a great occasion."

The exact make-up for the Kiwis line-up on Thursday has still to be decided but Fleming was relieved to leave Canterbury on Sunday night with no further injury worries on top of those already well documented.

Simon Doull faces a race against time to be fit but Geoff Allott and Dion Nash should be ready to spearhead the attack against England.



STEPHEN FLEMING

Another plus for Fleming was the long stint by left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori who shared the wickets with Chris Cairns - man-of-the-match with a 7-116 return - against Kent who salvaged a draw to remain undefeated against the Kiwis in nine matches stretching back to 1927.

Another interested spectator was the Kent coach and former New Zealand opener John Wright.

Wright, overlooked for the job of coach to succeed Steve Rixon when he leaves the job in September, had more than one eye on his fellow countrymen.

He said: "I thought Cairns bowled as well as I've seen him for a long time and Vettori also did well. But I must say I am pleased that we held out for the draw."

Calderon won't say sorry



ROBERTO AYALA and Diego Simeone had to intervene to prevent Calderon from saying sorry to the unwritten rule of football that you do not air grievances with colleagues or coaches in public.

The Independiente forward said: "I broke no code, I said what I thought; it happened after he slapped me off publicly in front of everyone. What code can you break if you are in an airport? I would have broken the protocol if I had made known things spoken about in private but in this case I did not."

Calderon, formerly with Italian outfit Napoli, said he would gladly confront Bielsa

anywhere. He wanted: "I am not accustomed to dealing with liars. Really I would like him to repeat the same things that he said to me in Asuncion in any place. It upset me a lot."

Calderon said he doubted he would accept any future call-up to the national team.

Bielsa has faced calls for his head following Argentina's exit with some pundits demanding that Boca Juniors coach Carlos Bianchi become the new boss.

But beleaguered Bielsa received some backing from Argentinean legend Diego Maradona, who claimed the former Espanyol boss had not been given full control of team affairs hitherto.

MU land in Shanghai



SHANGHAI, July 20: English football giants Manchester United arrived here Tuesday ahead of a sold-out exhibition match against Chinese league leaders Shanghai Shenhua reports AFP.

Protected from public scrutiny by scores of police, the team - winners of the English Premier League, FA Cup and European Cup treble - left Hongqiao airport in a convoy, an AFP photographer said.

Excitement among local football fans is high but has been muted slightly following the announcement that star midfielder and English international David Beckham would not be joining his teammates, who have just completed a tour of Australia.

All 80,000 tickets for Wednesday night's match sold out on an unheard-of five weeks in advance, with blackmarket prices soaring far above face value. Fears of counterfeiting pushed organisers into printing the tickets in Hong Kong, using state-of-the-art technology.

Beckham reportedly re-

turned from his honeymoon with pop star Victoria "Posh Spice" Adams on an injury.

Also absent are captain Roy Keane and United manager Alex Ferguson, who is busy being knighted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace on July 21.

Norwegian defender Ronny Johnsen, England midfielder Paul Scholes and defender Gary Neville also stayed at home to recuperate from off-season injuries.

But star forwards Dwight Yorke, Andy Cole, Ryan Giggs and Teddy Sheringham are expected to take the pitch.

The local Wenhui Daily printed a detailed schedule of the team's short 48-hour stay in the bustling eastern seaboard city.

United, who have legions of supporters throughout the world, are hoping to capitalise on their phenomenal success by further promoting their brand during the Australia-China tour.

The football world's richest and most glamorous club made 29.6 million pounds profit last year after excluding players' transfer fees.



INTER'S FRESHMEN: (L-R) Christian Vieri, Angelo Peruzzi, Laurent Blanc, Marcello Lippi (coach), Vladimir Jugovic and Fabrizio Ferron, all newcomers to Serie A giants Inter Milan, being presented to the press at Milan on July 19.

Russia to bid for Euro 2008

MOSCOW, July 20: The Russian Football Union (RFU) executive committee has decided to bid to host the 2008 European championships, the Sport Express newspaper reported Tuesday, reports AFP.

The ambitious RFU have also sent to European football's ruling body UEFA a bid to host the 2000 European Championships League final in the recently-renovated Luzhniki stadium, where last season's UEFA Cup final was held in May.

The RFU plan to host the European championships needs supported by the country's government, according to the existing UEFA regulations.

Russia's football chief Vyacheslav Koloskov said he already sent his proposals to the country's Prime Minister, Sergei Stepashin, and was confident of gaining support.

Koloskov said eight host cities for the European championships would be chosen from a list of 11 candidates, which include Moscow, St Petersburg, Kaliningrad, Yaroslavl, Voronezh, Nizhny Novgorod, Rostov, Krasnodar, Samara, Vladikavkaz and Volgograd.

Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland have already announced a joint bid to host the 2008 European championship.

McCoist signs fresh contract

GLASGOW, July 20: Veteran Scottish striker Ally McCoist has signed a new one-year contract with Premier League side Kilmarnock, reports AFP.

The 36-year-old former Rangers star has agreed to play out his career with the Rugby Park club after injury blighted his first season under manager Bobby Williamson.

McCoist had been thinking over a new deal and has other projects in the pipeline, including his acting debut in Robert Duvall's film *The Cup*.

The Ayrshire outfit have qualified for the UEFA Cup this season and face Icelandic side KR Reykjavik in the first qualifying round next month.

Kilmarnock's recent performances have demonstrated the quality of the staff and the coaching team, said McCoist.

"There is great ambition at the club and that was a decisive factor for me last year because I remain ambitious to succeed in the game."

Samaranch to go to Athens

ATHENS, July 20: IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch visits Greece later this week amid reported concerns over delays in preparation for the Athens 2004 Games and the resignation of the event's chief organiser Stratis Stratigis, reports Reuters.

Samaranch is to meet Prime Minister Costas Simitis and although government spokesman Dimitris Reppas said the visit did not reflect concern, a source in Greece's Olympic movement said yesterday: "If you know Samaranch, then you know that he asked to meet Simitis because he is indeed concerned with Athens's preparation progress."

Work on the Olympic Village has yet to start and there have also been delays over the venues for sports such as yachting, softball, baseball and rowing.

Stratigis resigned as president of the organising committee just under two weeks ago citing personal reasons but government officials have said he quit over an order not to attend the wedding of the former Greek king's daughter in London.

Mr Stratigis's successor will have a mountain-load of work to do. Little has been done until now and it is not just the organising committee's fault, the Olympic source said.

The committee has been constantly fighting state red tape, lack of funds and sometimes even indifference by the ministries involved in the works necessary for the 2004 Olympics, the source added.

Two possible candidates to succeed Stratigis are Yannis Angelopoulos, a millionaire Athens lawyer who led the city's campaign to win the Games, and Petros Lambrou, governor of state-run Agricultural Bank.

Vieri relishing the prospect



MILAN, July 20: Inter Milan's new star Christian Vieri Tuesday called on the club's fans to give Ronaldo and himself time to build a winning combination, reports AFP.

Inter splashed out nearly 50 million dollars to buy Vieri from Lazio with club president Massimo Moratti pairing the world's expensive footballer with probably its most gifted striker, Ronaldo.

But Vieri sent the San Siro faithful a warning about the new season, as the team started their pre-season training this week - don't expect instant success.

"With Ronaldo next to me, I'll avoid at least 50 percent of the kicks that I usually get from defenders," he quipped.

The Brazilian star was held back by tendon trouble throughout last season, but has recently shown signs of being back to his dazzling best.

"I've seen him in action in the Copa America - he scored goals, broke forward and was always looking for the ball," said Vieri.

"I'm not the sort who goes around making predictions, but if the pair of us are able to stay fit, then we are going to have fun, that's for sure. This is a team of champions."

"On paper we aren't a bad strike partnership. But if I don't know how he likes to move and he doesn't know what I like, how are we going to catch our opponents by surprise?"

"So I'm asking people to have a bit of patience and to not expect everything to work straight away. We are getting down to work now with enthusiasm and with the best will in the world."

"But that's all I feel able to guarantee at the moment."

Vieri, who has been with eight different teams in eight years, also said he had no regrets about giving up the chance of playing in the European

Champions League with Lazio to join a club who won't be playing in Europe for at least a year.

"Everyone sees things their own way," he said. "I'm really pleased with the decision I've made and I've got no desire to keep on switching teams. So I hope that everything goes smoothly now and that I can stay at Inter as long as possible."

"Lazio gave me the European Cup Winners' Cup and some very intense emotions at the very end of last season, when I left the pitch in tears," he said, harking back to the final day, when Lazio were pipped by AC Milan for the league title.

"But if Inter do well in the league next season, then we are going to grab people's attention all round the world, and the fact that we're not in the European cups will not be such a disadvantage."

"And anyway," he added mischievously, "Who is to say that Lazio aren't going to get knocked out in the first round?"

Cole sets a bad example



MELBOURNE, Australia, July 20: Stricken Australian defender Simon Colosimo says he has received no apology from Manchester United's Andy Cole for the wild tackle that has placed his football in jeopardy, reports AFP.

The Olympic team member was carried off in last Sunday's 1-0 loss to United in Sydney after Cole's studs collected him high on his left knee.

The 20-year-old, who will be out of the game for a minimum of six months, requires a total knee reconstruction and an imminent move to Europe has now been put on hold, possibly permanently.

Colosimo said Tuesday while Manchester United's Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich and Teddy Sheringham had offered their sympathy, Cole had said nothing and was suffering an ego problem.

"If he kicked me on the shin or the ankle, well that's all part of the game, but so high up on the knee was malicious," Colosimo said Tuesday.

"If it had been me I would have gone to see him and apologised, but I think he's got a bit of an ego."

Colosimo said the match was starting to get out of hand

in Sydney and referee Simon Micallef was prepared to overlook wild challenges because it was a supposed friendly match. "Players on both sides were getting out of hand, there were a lot of senseless tackles going in and nobody was getting booked," he said.

Carlton manager Lou Sticca Tuesday cited compensation cases in Britain for "rash or malicious tackles" in football matches.

"The club is doing everything it can to stand by Simon. At this level of elite sport this is a genuine human tragedy," Sticca said.

"This young man had his whole career ahead of him which he would have undoubtedly have continued at the highest level in a leading soccer country such as England, Italy or Germany."

"There is now at least a serious chance that his abundant promise has been crudely cut short," Sticca said.

Colosimo, the young defender out of the game in the 30th minute of the match at the Olympic stadium, Colosimo crumpled to the ground and began waving a hand frantically to the team bench indicating that he had a serious knee injury.

Video replays at the ground showed that Cole had collected Colosimo high on his knee with his studs.

Colosimo has been linked to several European clubs including German giants Bayern Munich and Greek club Panathinaikos and had several

Stan for a new beginning

LONDON, July 20: Troubled former England striker Stan Collymore said on Tuesday he was looking forward to kick-starting his career at Fulham after his loan switch from Premiership side Aston Villa, reports AFP.

The 28-year-old joined the first division side on Monday and is hopeful he can persuade Fulham manager Paul Bracewell to make it a permanent move.

Villa boss John Gregory has left Collymore in little doubt that his future lies away from Villa Park after he missed part of last season because of treatment for depression.

"I would be happy to come to Fulham," said Collymore. "I don't think it's any secret that at Aston Villa the manager in particular doesn't want me hanging around for much longer so I want to go somewhere I'm wanted and play

football and Fulham have offered that."

Bracewell said he had no doubts about signing a player who has acquired a reputation for being a handful in the dressing room and left his last three clubs in acrimonious circumstances.

But Collymore knows he will be under close scrutiny during his three-month loan spell at Craven Cottage.

He said: "Fulham want to look at me closely over the next three months and it gives me an opportunity to look around for myself and see what our capabilities are, but I would love to come to the club."

"I'm absolutely delighted to be here. Once I knew of Fulham's interest and spoke to their people, I was very impressed by the set-up and what they hoped to achieve over the next two or three years."

"Paul Bracewell is a new manager but I've been very impressed with his ideas and enthusiasm and that's music to my ears."

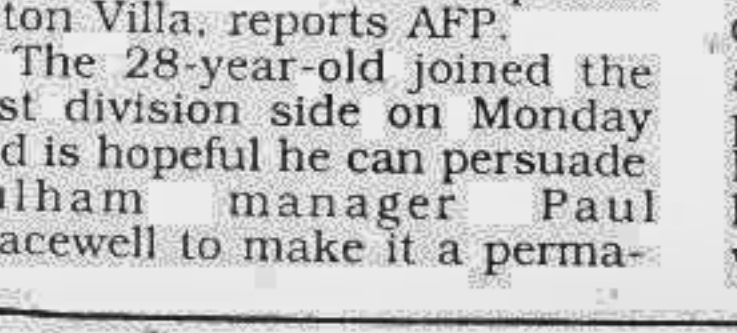
Ironically, Collymore's problems at Villa started when Fulham came to Villa Park in the FA Cup last season.

The striker failed to turn up for the tie when Kevin Keegan's team upset the odds by beating the Premiership club and Villa soon announced Collymore would be undergoing full-time treatment for depression.

Collymore and the rest of the Fulham squad fly to Scotland on Tuesday for a pre-season tour which includes games against Hearts on Wednesday and St Johnstone on Saturday.



Players of Dosh Para Jubo Sangha receive prizes from Major General (ret'd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan (L) after the Charak Khola Moloy Friendship football tournament final at the Daudkandi Barakata School and College ground on July 18. Dosh Para lifted the title beating Gouripur Abahani Sangha 1-0 in tie-breakers.



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