

Castle Cup final Angola take first leg

LUANDA, Sept 27: The destiny of the Castle Cup Southern Africa championship hangs in the balance after Angola beat Namibia 1-0 in the first leg of the final here on Sunday.

Midfielder Alberto 'Betinho' Ferreira scored the 14th-minute winner by converting a penalty kick before a capacity 60,000 crowd at the Citadela Stadium.

Ferreira regained his composure after being tripped by Namibia captain Bimbo Tjihera and calmly slotted a low shot into the corner of the net past the outstretched hand of Ronnie Kanelelo.

It was ironic that outsiders Namibia should lose to a penalty kick as they reached the final of the three-year competition for the first time by beating Malawi, South Africa and Swaziland in shootouts.

However, the Brave Warriors should not be unhappy with the result as missing stars Mohammed Ouseb, Robert Nauseb, Razundura Tjikuzo and Quinton Jacobs will be available for the second leg in Windhoek on Saturday.

Angola were on top for the most of the opening half on a warm, cloudless afternoon in the coastal capital city with leading Castle Cup scorer Ferreira prominent.

However, the Brazilian-coached Black Antelopes tired in the closing stages and Namibian Simon Utoni completed a miserable match by failing to score with only goalkeeper Fernando 'Nando' Morais to beat.

Oswaldo 'Joni' Cruz rescued Angola earlier in the second half by heading a spectacular overhead kick from Elphas Shivate off the line when Morais misjudged an Utoni corner.

Utoni fired over twice late in the first half with only the goalkeeper to beat while the legs of Kanelelo foiled Ferreira and unmarked Salvador 'Jaburu' Avelino spurned another chance by heading at Kanelelo.

Long-serving Angolan defender Juliano Konda won the man of the match prize awarded after each match in a championship bankrolled by a South African brewery.

English Div 1

Ipswich down Man City

IPSWICH, England, Sept 27: A 67th-minute goal by debutant Gary Croft gave Ipswich Town a hard-fought 2-1 victory over Manchester City at Portman Road in the English first division on Sunday, reports AFP.

The result lifted Ipswich into second place on 17 points, one point behind leaders Birmingham and one ahead of City.

Croft, who signed from Blackburn in midweek, collected a pass from Jamie Clapham and his right foot shot deflected off veteran defender Richard Johnson giving City goalkeeper Nicky Weaver no chance.

Ipswich had gone ahead after 43 minutes when a glorious header gave David Johnson his ninth goal of the season.

He rose to power home a right-wing cross from Paul Wilnis. Weaver got a hand to the ball but could not prevent it from entering the net.

It was the first goal City had conceded in away league matches this season.

Ipswich abandoned their sweeper system for the second half and within five minutes City had drawn level.

A cross from Paul Dickov from the left enabled Bernard international Shaun Goater to glide home his seventh goal of the season.

Basketball diplomacy!

SEOUL, Sept 27: South Korean basketball players headed to North Korea today to play the first friendly matches between the hostile nations divided for more than 50 years, organisers said, reports AFP.

An 80-strong delegation, including 26 basketball players from South Korea's biggest conglomerate Hyundai Group, flew to Beijing in the morning heading for Pyongyang, Hyundai officials said.

The Hyundai team will play the first inter-Korean friendly basketball matches, dubbed here the 'Unification Basketball Tournament', against its Northern counterpart in Pyongyang on Tuesday and Wednesday.

South Korea's three major television networks, including KBS, plan to broadcast the matches — women's and men's mixed match on Tuesday, and a women's and a men's match on Wednesday — via satellite.

WTA Tour rankings

ST PETERSBURG, Florida, Sept 27 (Reuters): Top 20 women's tennis players, according to the WTA Tour rankings issued today (number in brackets is previous week's ranking):

Players	Pts
1 (1) Hingis	5,620
2 (2) Davenport	5,014
3 (3) Venus Williams	3,991
4 (4) Serena Williams	3,144
5 (5) Monica Seles	2,880
6 (6) Mary Pierce	2,628
7 (9) Amanda Coetzer	1,925
8 (7) Barbara Schett	1,918
9 (8) Julie Halard	1,897
10 (13) Van Roost	1,833
11 (10) Nathalie Tauziat	1,796
12 (17) Amelie Mauresmo	1,753
13 (12) Sandrine Testud	1,721
14 (16) Conchita Martinez	1,586
15 (11) Sanchez-Vicario	1,574
16 (17) Likhovtseva	1,554
17 (17) Likhovtseva	1,449
18 (18) Novotna	1,421
19 (19) Irina Spirlea	1,319
20 (22) Amy Frazier	1,300

Sachin at the helm till March



NEW DELHI, Sept 27: (Internet report) Sachin Tendulkar has been named skipper of the Indian team till March next year, says a report of The Hindu daily.

The national selectors, under the newly-elected chairman, Chandu Borde, met here on Saturday and after prolonged discussions announced the Rest of India XI for the Irani Trophy match against Karnataka next week, besides the India 'A' and Board President's XI teams which will face the visiting New Zealand team in two three-day fixtures next month.

Addressing mediapersons, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary, JY Lele, said Tendulkar's nomination was 'subject to his fitness'. Tendulkar, after being diagnosed for back ailment in Adelaide, had indicated that he would be fit to lead the side again in the home series against New Zealand.

After the World Cup, Tendulkar was named skipper for the three-nation tournament in Colombo and Singapore but owing to a recurrence of the back-injury, the master batsman could complete only the first leg of his assignment. Jadeja and Ganguly shared the responsibility in Singapore before the latter led India to a 2-1 triumph over West Indies in Toronto.

Jadeja regained the captaincy for the on-going four-nation tournament in Nairobi.

Should Tendulkar remain fit for the entire season, his assignments will include three Tests and five one-dayers at home against New Zealand (between October 10 and November 17) besides three Tests and a tri-series, involving host Australia and Pakistan, between November 26, 1999 to February 13, 2000.

Lele also said that Kapil Dev, the new coach, would partici-

pate in the selection process from the next meeting of the committee as an 'invited member'. The selectors will meet on October 5 to announce the team for the first Test against New Zealand at Mohali (October 10 to 14).

Announcing that the new physiotherapist, South African Andrew Leipus, would join the team at Mohali on October 8 or 9, Lele defended India playing so much international cricket.

"India played less than 12 Tests and 40 one-day internationals (the ceiling laid down by

and Australia.

Lele also announced that the Board had received a letter from the USA Cricket Association expressing regret about the poor state of the pitch for the recent five-match 'A' series between India and Australia, in Los Angeles.

The selectors also finalised 42 aspirants - in three teams of 14 each - who will be on 'trial' in the next month's major engagements.

Veteran wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia will lead the Rest of India XI against Ranji Trophy champion Karnataka in the five-day Irani Cup tie at Bangalore from October 1.

The match will give Mongia an opportunity to prove his fitness after a hand-injury during the World Cup forced him out of reckoning.

Mumbai's Amol Mazumdar has been named skipper of the India 'A' team which will face New Zealand in a three-day match at Pune from September 30 to October 2.

Maharashtra's Hrishikesh Kanitkar will lead the Board President's XI in another three-day match against the Kiwis at Jodhpur from October 5 to 7.

All members of the India 'A' team, which was drubbed 1-4 by Australia 'A', have been accommodated in these teams.

Prominent among those ignored are left-handed batsmen Vinod Kamble, Amay Khurasiya, wicket-keeper batsman Vijay Dahiya of Delhi.

Considering Mohammad Azharuddin's stature, it was decided not to make him go through these 'trial matches' to prove his fitness.

Since Karnataka will get to play in the Irani Trophy match and a three-day match against New Zealand, no player from that State has been included in any of the three teams.

Mr. Lele confirmed that Anil Kumble and Javagal Srinath would turn out for Karnataka in these two matches.

Lele needed no reminder of the fitness level of the Indian players as compared to their counterparts in South Africa

means a lot to win when it matters the most. It's not hard for me to keep things in perspective," said a man whose ranking had dropped towards 140 two years ago. "I'm just thrilled to evolve in the situation."

Arriving in Germany with a much less optimistic demeanour will be Yevgeny Kafelnikov, the Australian Open champion whose Russia lost a Davis Cup semifinal Sunday against Australia in Brisbane.

Agassi, Kafelnikov, Australian Open finalist Thomas Enqvist of Sweden and Paris finalist Andrei Medvedev of the Ukraine all have first-round byes.

Agassi could then begin with a crushing of German home hopes if first-time participant Tommy Haas reaches the quarterfinals for a date with the American.

In opening-round matches, French Open semifinalist Fernando Meligeni of Brazil plays Ecuador's Nicolas Lapentti, while the only other American in the field, Vince Spadea, faces Dutchman Richard Krajicek. Brazil's Gustavo Kuerten begins with Briton Greg Rusedski.

Williams, younger of the two tennis-playing sisters, should be rested after coping a 16,900 dollar fine from the WTA Tour for pulling out as top seed of this week's event in Luxembourg, citing the catch-all excuse of "exhaustion."

The 17-year-old will try and emulate the 1998 feat of big sis-

ter Venus, who beat Swiss Patty Schnyder for the crown in the first-ever women's competition held at the Cup.

WTA Tour officials said it was the fourth time this year that Williams had pulled out of an event. She also skipped the Hilton Head Island (knee), withdrew from Wimbledon (influenza) and stayed away from Toronto (tendinitis, right shoulder).

Swiss Martina Hingis will try to come good after failing to reach the 1998 final through injury. She starts with an Australian Open finale replay against Amelie Mauresmo of France.

Venus Williams plays Barbara Schett: Serena gets Spanish veteran, Serena Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario. Wimbledon winner Lindsay Davenport, who beat Monica Seles Sunday for a Tokyo title, faces Mary Pierce of France.

The elite Grand Slam -- restricted to the best dozen men and top eight women's performers from the four Grand Slams of the year -- is likely on its last legs in Munich, where it has been held at the Olympichalle since 1990.

Officials hinted last week that the International Tennis Federation tournament might be moving venue in 2000. Its provisional place on the calendar has been slid back two weeks to mid-October in order to avoid the tourist and hotel-room crush of the city's Oktoberfest beer festival.

The clincher came on the same hole where US caddy Francis Ouimet sank a decisive birdie to upset five-time British Open champion Harry Vardon and fellow Brit Ted Ray at the 1913 US Open.

"It's a little spooky Justin made that putt on 17," Crenshaw said. "Don't believe in fate? I do. I could feel it. I couldn't describe it. I felt confident. Darned if we didn't pull it off. Unbelievable. It was like a force pulled us together."

Leonard certainly does. The US hero rallied from 4 down with seven to play to halve with Masters champion Jose Maria Olazabal by winning four holes in a row, then taking the pivotal half-point with a stunner at 17.

"I didn't know if I could make it," Leonard said. "I was trying to get the ball close. That was probably my first goal. It's a putt we had all seen during practice rounds. It was just one of those things. I think the ball was just destined to go in."

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Cup Winners' Cup Pirates storm into semis

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 27: South African club Orlando Pirates defied the odds to defeat ASM Sangaredi 3-1 in Guinea on Sunday and reach the African Cup Winners' Cup semifinals, reports AFP.

Former African Champions' Cup winners Pirates took a one-goal lead into the second leg of a delayed quarter-final and led 3-0 by half-time through goals from Andries Sebola (2) and Sibusiso Zuma.

Karim Conté struck a late consolation goal for unfashionable Sangaredi, who were hoping to become the first Guinean club since 1983 to reach the last four of the annual competition.

A 4-1 aggregate victory earned the Buccaneers a semifinal showdown with 1992 winners Africa Sports of Cote d'Ivoire. Club African of Tunisia face Al-Masry of Egypt in the other tie.

Transfers, injuries, retirement and an international call-up left Pirates' Romanian coach Ted Dumitru with only 13 players for the long journey to the coastal city of Conakry.

On arrival in West Africa, the South Africans were told the match would be staged on Sunday instead of Saturday as originally scheduled, while a visit to the match venue triggered another shock.

"It looks as if the grass has not been cut for about two years," moaned veteran Pirates manager Lawrence 'Big Bear' Ngubane, whose team play in arguably the finest surface in Africa at FNB Stadium.

But his pre-match anger turned to delight when the final whistle blew on Sunday evening as he praised the players for a heroic effort under extreme pressure.

Club African survived a late scare to defeat Power Dynamos of Zambia 2-1 in Tunis on Sunday night through early goals from Algerian Rezeki Amrouche and Togolese Libamani Yedibahoma.

Greg Rusedski later delighted the large crowd with a comfortable win over Grant Stafford in the dead rubber, a match reduced to the best of three sets.

The British number one was always in control against a player ranked 500th in the world and completed a 6-4, 7-5 win that made the final match score 4-1.

"Over a whole year with the nature of the matches you need a little bit of luck but if Greg and I first and foremost stay healthy, we know we can beat anyone in the world," a delighted Henman said.

Team captain David Lloyd, who had threatened to resign if Britain had lost to the lowly-ranked South Africans, added: "We needed to stay in the World Group. It's very important to be in the premier division and to go down would have made it

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Britain in World Group



BIRMINGHAM, England, Sept 27: Tim Henman ensured Britain would play in the World Group of next year's Davis Cup when he thrashed South Africa's Neville Godwin 6-2, 6-2, 6-2 on Sunday to give his team an unassailable 3-1 lead in their relegation play-off, reports AFP.

Leading 2-1 overnight, the home side needed just one more win from the final day's reverse singles to ensure victory and retain their World Group status.

From then on Henman took control, breaking the South African twice with some superb passing shots on his way to the first set in 39 minutes.

Godwin, making his cup debut, had taken British number one Greg Rusedski to four sets on the opening day but simply had no answer to an at times inspired Henman.

The British number two rattled off 10 games in a row from 2-1 down in the first set to 5-0 up in the second and then sur-

very difficult for us to get back up again.

"Hopefully now we can get some home matches and who knows perhaps we can win the Cup. I really believe we can."

World number seven Henman produced some of his best tennis since reaching the Wimbledon semifinals to take the first set against 1998 ranked Godwin at the National Indoor Arena.

The 25-year-old from Oxford had won just three singles matches since losing to Pete Sampras at the All England

Roared on by another enthusiastic crowd Henman won five games in a row and could have won up the tie with two match points on Godwin's serve.

The South African showed commendable character to hold on but it was only delaying the inevitable and Henman duly served out to complete his victory.



Greg Rusedski of Britain makes a backhand return against South Africa's Grant Stafford during their Davis Cup fixture on September 26.

Club, his poor form culminating in a disastrous straight-sets loss in the first round of the US Open.

But buoyed by his victory over Grant Stafford on the first day, Henman looked much more confident against Godwin, saving two break points in his first service game with consecutive aces.

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Hewitt stakes a claim



BRISBANE, Sept 27: Lleyton Hewitt plans to keep Mark Philippoussis out of Australia's Davis Cup tennis final against France in December, reports AFP.

The 18-year-old stepped into the breach when the 'Scud' and Pat Rafter withdrew injured for last weekend's semifinal and upset the odds with two superb singles wins in a shock 4-1 win over the Russians.