

Sport

Donald eager to return

JOHANNESBURG, Sept 5 (Internet report): Rendered hors de combat by an ankle injury for most part of the English county season South African strike bowler Allan Donald will arrive in Bloemfontein on Tuesday with his heart set on making a quicker than expected return to action for his native Free State.

"Definitely not against Boland this weekend, but hopefully against Province on the 14th," said the 32-year-old paceman shortly before flying out of London on Monday.

Although he was originally advised to rest up for about 10 weeks, Donald is convinced in his own mind that all his troubles are now behind him. "It's been a frustrating English summer for me," he admitted, "but at the end of the day I reckon I did the right thing by not trying to play. I've had a good, long break... all the little niggles have cleared up."

With his 33rd birthday on the horizon (October 20), however, South Africa's leading wicket-taker intends easing rather than rushing back into harness.

"I'm looking at net spells of only 15 minutes to start out with," he said, "and then build-up from there to the Province game."

Why the sudden rush? "Well, if I rested for 10 weeks that would take me right up to the first Test against England and would rule me out of the two Tests against Zimbabwe... a couple I don't want to miss out," he explained.

Donald's interest in the Zimbabweans is two-fold. First-off he wants to feature in his hometown's first ever Test and he also believes the relatively inexperienced Zimbabwean batting will provide him with an excellent opportunity to add to his 265 Test scalps.

"I've only got 35 to go to my 300," he said, "and I don't want to miss out on any chance of achieving that goal."

Baggio, Leonardo to play in Japan

TOKYO, Oct 5: World Cup veterans Roberto Baggio and Leonardo will team up next week in an exhibition match in Japan, reports Reuters.

Baggio, the 32-year-old Italian forward with Internazionale, and Brazilian midfielder Leonardo, of Serie A champions AC Milan, will play for a World XI against a Japan XI in the J-League's annual "Dream Match" at Tokyo's National Stadium on Monday afternoon.

Members of the World XI were selected from foreign players in the J League, with Baggio and Leonardo being invited as special guests, organisers said.

Leonardo, 30, played for Kashima Antlers in Japan for two years after the 1994 World Cup and then went to Paris Saint-Germain.

The World XI will be coached by Shimizu S-Pulse manager Steve Perryman, whose team are top of the J League's second stage championship.

"Obviously they are world-class players with fantastic experience from any countries," said Perryman.

"They can make goals and score goals, and I'm sure they'll bring excitement and expectancy to the Japanese fans."

"Also, the Japanese players will want to prove themselves against this quality, so they'll be two very positive players for our team."

The Japan XI squad include World Cup players Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, Etsuke Nakanishi, Naoki Soma, Yutaka Akita, Teruyoshi Ito, Masashi Nakayama, Shoji Jo and Masami Ibara.

British cops after Indian suspect

LONDON, Oct 5 (AFP): British detectives are to fly to India to interview sports promoter Ashim Khetpal about charges that he tried to bribe the England team into trying to throw a Test match, according to an English newspaper.

The News of the World reported that England bowler Chris Lewis admits he met Khetpal in a news agent's shop last August and was offered 300,000 pounds to fix the Old Trafford game against New Zealand.

When Lewis refused, the paper claims that Khetpal contacted New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming.

A Scotland Yard spokesman told the British Sunday newspaper that the whole England team would be quizzed over the bribe allegations.

Khetpal is reported to have arrived in England with an unnamed Indian businessman and checked into the Holiday Inn in Leicester where the New Zealand team was staying.

He later offered Fleming 300,000 pounds cash to fix the match. The paper said he left his phone numbers and gave Fleming his card. The New Zealander reported the incident immediately to the International Cricket Council.

Khetpal is then reported to have travelled to London, where he met Lewis and asked him to offer wicketkeeper Alec Stewart and bowler Allan Mullally 300,000 pounds a piece to drop catches and bowl wide as well as offering Lewis the same amount.

"I was introduced to some people who had what they called a business proposal - but it was a bribe wrapped up as a business proposition," Lewis told the newspaper.

"That shows the state of mind of these people - I suppose to them it is a business."

Waugh points at attitude



COLOMBO, Oct 5 (Internet report): Steve Waugh has questioned Australia's preparation and dedication after more rain ensured Sri Lanka a historic and much-deserved 1-0 series victory yesterday.

Injuries and bad weather unsettled the Australians but Waugh made it clear this was no excuse. The tourists, regarded as the best Test team in the world, were outplayed by a revived Sri Lanka.

"You've got to overcome that if you're a top-quality side and I think we learned some lessons over here," Waugh said after the last day of the third and final Test was washed out without a ball being bowled.

"We've got to improve our cricket. We've got to play more consistently and not take things for granted."

"We weren't good enough in the first two Tests. It was a wake-up call for all the guys. We've got to prepare a little better and our attitude has to improve a bit."

"It did this Test and we played much better. We played to what we were capable of but it was too late."

"We can't afford to do that. We've got one Test coming up in Zimbabwe in a week or 10 days."

We've got to be switched on for that otherwise we'll lose that as well."

Sri Lanka's first series victory over Australia has given cricket an enormous boost here following a period of turmoil after their win in the one-day final.

When the 1996 World Cup champions were bundled out of the last tournament, the board, coach and captain were sacked.

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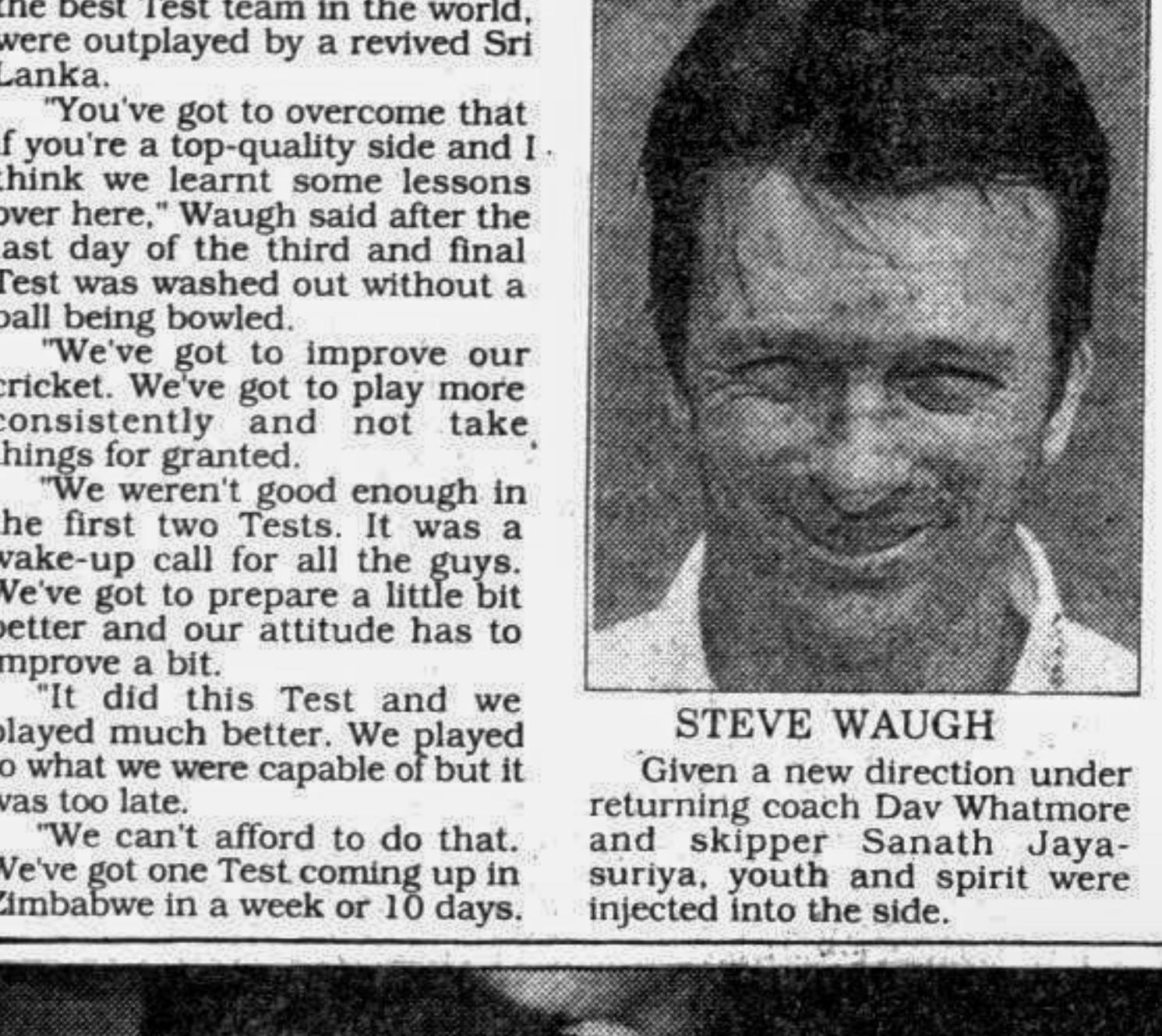
STEVE WAUGH

Given a new direction under returning coach Dav Whatmore and skipper Sanath Jayasuriya, youth and spirit were injected into the side.

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He debuted against England in Melbourne last summer but broke down and needed a groin operation.

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Belgian squad for England match

BRUSSELS, Oct 5 (AFP): Belgian coach Robert Waseige named Monday a 20-man squad for Belgium's friendly against England in Sunderland on Sunday.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Geert De Vlieger (Anderlecht), Ronald Gasperic (Extremadura/Spa)

Defenders: David Brocken (Anderlecht), Glen De Boeck (Anderlecht), Eric Deflandre (FC Brugge), Marc Hendrikx (Genk), Eric Van Meir (Lierse), David Oyen (Anderlecht), Jacky Peeters (Arminia Bielefeld/Ger), Nico Van Kerckhoven (Schalke 04/Ger)

Middlefielders: Bart Goor (Anderlecht), Stefaan Tanghe (Mouscron), Yves Vanderhaeghe (Mouscron), Johan Walem (Parma/Ita), Philippe Clement (FC Brugge), Marc Wilmots (Schalke 04/Ger)

Forwards: Emile Mpenza (Standard), Mbo Mpenza (Standard), Branko Strupar (Genk), Toni Brogno (Westerlo)

Zagallo loses his job

SAO PAULO, Brazil, Oct 5: Brazilian footballing legend Mario Zagallo was on Monday sacked as coach of Sao Paulo Portuguesa because of bad results, reports AFP.

The 68-year-old, involved in all four of Brazil's World Cup triumphs, has failed to lead the club to victory during the last seven games and the club are 20th out of 22 clubs in the table.

Zagallo's contract, signed in December 1998 to bring success to a club which has had little of it in nearly three decades, was to run till the end of this season.

Zagallo won the World Cup as a player in 1958 and 1962, as a coach in 1970 and as a technical advisor to coach Carlos Alberto Perreira in 1994.

He was replaced by Wanderley Luxemburgo following Brazil's second place in the World Cup last year.

Eriksson's worry

ROME, Oct 5: Lazio coach Sven Goran Eriksson claimed on Monday that his team were heading for major trouble because of the demands being made on his team by national coaches, reports AFP.

Eriksson backed a plan put forward by FIFA chief Sepp Blatter, who would like to see all international fixtures limited to a single period of the year (mid-June to mid-July).

Lazio have the best midfield in the Serie A with Mathias Almeida, Diego Simeone and Juan Sebastian Veron, but all three play for Argentina, as does defender Nestor Sensini.

"Lazio will soon have major problems putting a team together because many of our foreign players are being called up by their various national teams," Eriksson complained.

"UEFA and FIFA ought to arrange the calendar in a different way, so as to avoid all these international matches being played during the league season."

German football has often been marked by bitter and protracted struggles among its rival goalkeepers, the most recent having been Kahn's bid to dislodge his predecessor Andreas Koke.

Traditionally the elder of the two challengers is allowed to play out his days while the younger up-and-comer must bide his time. That was why 30-year-old Kahn only played his first major tournament at last year's World Cup and refuses to budge an inch to his Borussia Dortmund rival Lehmann on next year's Euro tournament.

Munich's Olympic stadium, which holds 63,500 people, is sold out for Saturday's qualifier however with such a large number of Turks living in Germany there is bound to be a vocal support for the visitors as well.

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