

Gibbs on his mettle

PIETERMARITZBURG, Nov 17 (Internet report): Herschelle Gibbs will have to find his form quickly and impressively if he is to regain his place in the South African cricket side for the first Test against England starting at the Wanderers next week.

Gibbs, who has been sidelined since damaging a big toe ligament in the international one-day tournament in Kenya late in September, is back in the Western Province side for the SuperSport match against North West this weekend.

He showed excellent form in Kenya and, fit and in touch, he is an obvious Test selection. But his lack of action over the past month will obviously count against him.

Gary Kirsten, who was nursing a broken finger, is also back this weekend. The left-hander has not had much cricket this season and one suspects that he will have to show consistent provincial form to earn a recall.

Adam Bacher and Boeta Dippenaar have been the replacements in the national side, with the latter the more solid. Apart from the possible inclusion of Gibbs for Bacher, the team is certain to remain unchanged for the Test.

Coach Graham Ford said on Tuesday he was satisfied with the way the side performed in thumping Zimbabwe in the two Tests.

"There is still hard work ahead but we went up to Harare and did the job properly and improved in areas which had worried us after the first Test."

"I was particularly taken with the way Allan Donald bowled. He has been under pressure and some of the criticism has been unfair, but he reacted positively and has worked really hard."

"It shows just how professional he is. He sets himself such high standards," the coach added.

Call to ban abusing fans?

LONDON, Nov 17: Spectators chanting racial abuse at English cricket matches should be banned from future games, a report into racism in cricket said on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

The report, commissioned by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and entitled "Racial Equality in Cricket", makes a series of recommendations including provisions for offending spectators.

It said public address announcements should be made at the first indications of racist chanting or offensive behaviour "condemning such actions and stating that immediate action will be taken and a ban for future matches implemented for offenders."

Terry Bates, chairman of the group which compiled the report, said a present spectator could commit an offence in one country and attend a match in another the next day.

"A disciplinary programme needs to be put in place," he said.

The report also called on the ECB to ensure ethnic minority clubs had equal access to pitches and urged county clubs to extend their talent scouting systems.

ECB chief executive Tim Lamb welcomed the report although he said it contained no great revelations.

"We were always aware that some element of racism existed and we have not sat around idly and let it fester," he said.

"We have introduced an active programme of talent spotting and I am sure that many youngsters from ethnic backgrounds will catch our eye."

"Already, for example, 25 per cent of the players on the ECB's wrist spin development programme are of Asian origin and there are around 25 British Asians who are contracted to first class county clubs."

The Headingley Test venue in Leeds has a history of racist abuse from the stands. In 1996, around 200 people were ejected for unruly behaviour, involving taunts at the Pakistan team.

India clinch

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INDIA				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Cairns	7	4	10	0
Drum	5	0	41	1
Stirling	10	2	23	0
Aslie	4	0	19	0
Harris	6	0	30	0
Vettori	10	2	28	2
Tait	2	0	10	0

Result: Indian won by seven wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Saurav Ganguly.
Man-of-the-series: Saurav Ganguly.

Hobart Test

From page 13

We've had some good results but we've been a little bit up and down in the past 12 months.

There is also a murmur of concern over the form of number three batsman Justin Langer, who has scored just 96 in his last five matches at an average of 16 with scores of 7.5, 7.32, 44 and 1.

Waugh said he had the utmost confidence in Langer's ability to bounce back but revealed he had felt compelled to speak to him in private about his form.

"I told him I believe he's the best number three in Australia and that's why he's in the team. He's trying his hardest and I'm sure he's ready for a big score."



Former England captain Alec Stewart batting in the nets during a practice session at Centurion Park yesterday. — AFP photo

SL-Zim 1st Test begins today



BULAWAYO, Nov 17: Zimbabwe meet Sri Lanka in the first of three cricket Tests here Thursday with a final chance to redeem a poor year, reports AFP.

Sri Lanka, coming off a 1-0 series win over Australia who destroyed Zimbabwe in a one-off Test by ten wickets last month are therefore brimming with confidence.

However, it might not be so straightforward as that. A Zimbabwe batsman, David Houghton, took a monumental 26 runs off them on their only other tour here. And that was at Queen's Sports Club, where the first Test will be played.

Houghton is now retired and coaching the Zimbabweans but the memory of the victory is en-

Tests were simply part of a bad patch.

They will, however, find a different Sri Lanka to the 1994 tourists. That side sought draws and played ultra defensively in a bid to establish their new Test credentials. This one has come here not only to win, but win well.

Unfortunately for them they will find a good batting pitch, one that should enable the Zimbabwe batsmen to recover form. Sri Lanka do not have a pace bowler in the world's top 20 and they rely heavily on Chaminda Vaas for their attack and on the wily Muralitharan, whose spinning deceptions are legendary, to tackle the middle order.

Sri Lanka will not have Aravinda de Silva, whom the record books say is their best batsman. He pulled out of the tour, citing personal reasons.

But Sanath Jayasuriya the first Sri Lankan to score 3,000 runs and take 100 wickets, is a batsman of consequence. He figured in a 576-run partnership with Roshan Mahanama two years ago against India and he might break Zimbabwe hearts as well.

This is a young Sri Lanka team, with only Jayasuriya reaching his 30th birthday, so they should match Zimbabwe's well known fielding standards.

Zimbabwe's problems recently have been centred on batting, with collapses seemingly inevitable if the opening partnership does not hold up. Much will depend, therefore, on the Flower brothers Grant and Andy as well as Neil Johnson, Murray Goodwin and Alistair Campbell, who resigned as captain before the Australia Test in order to recapture batting form.

Zimbabwe are still without their main bowler Heath Streak, whose knee injury is taking longer to heal than expected. But he might be fit for the second Test in Harare next week.

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SQUADS

ZIMBABWE: Andy Flower (capt), Alistair Campbell, Grant Flower, Murray Goodwin, Trevor Gripper, Neil Johnson, Everton Mtambanazo, Mpu-mulelo Mbangwa, Henry Olonga, Rayon Price, Gavin Rennie, Bryan Strang, Andrew Whittall, Guy Whittall.

SRI LANKA: Sanath Jayasuriya (capt), Russell Arnold, Marvan Atapattu, T M Dilshan, Indika Gallage, Ranga Herath, Mahela Jayawardene, Prasanna Jayawardena, Ramesh Kaluwitharana, Muttiah Muralitharan, Suresh Perera, Indik de



SANATH JAYASURIYA scored his first Test cricket, will be strong. It might also encourage the present team to believe that their recent humiliating defeats by Australia and then by South Africa in two



ANDY FLOWER Seram, Chamara Silva, Nuwan Zoysa, Chaminda Vaas, Promodya Wickremasinghe. Umpires: Edward Nicholas (West Indies), Kevin Barbour (Zimbabwe - his first Test).



An AFP file photo of Brazilian football superstar Romario who has signed a three-month deal with Saudi club Al-Nassr to appear in the World Club Championship in January 2000.

Weah's heart with Milan



MILAN, Nov 17: George Weah ruled out speculation that he might be moving to Arsenal on Wednesday, saying that he plans to finish his career with AC Milan in two years' time, reports AFP.

Weah has recently been linked with a move to the Gunners, partly because they are coached by the Frenchman who discovered Weah back in 1988, ex-Monaco boss Arsene Wenger.

But the 33-year-old Liberian denied any interest in moving to North London, saying: "My second home is here. I'm like AC Milan, I'm black on the outside and red on the inside. There's red-and-black blood in my veins."

Houghton being closely monitored

BEIJING, Nov 17: The China Football Association (CFA) is reviewing the performance of the national coach Bobby Houghton in an apparent sign the Briton may be removed ahead of next year's Asian Cup.

"We are presently meeting and researching the situation. No decision has been made," a CFA spokesman told AFP.

"When I leave, I want to leave behind a wonderful impression on people, of an African who became big, alongside AC Milan."

As for a return to Wenger's orders, he said: "Why is this story of moving to England coming up again? It's just talk, there's never really been anything in it."

Weah, a crowd favourite here known affectionately as "Big George", has been struggling with a recurrence of a left knee injury which required surgery 10 years ago.

"If my knee continues to hurt, then it would be impossible for me to play for more than two years," Weah said. "Football is great, but I'll be needing my leg for the rest of my life."

And he went on: "I can't see me at 34 or 35 years old playing for another team, just for the money. My contract with Milan ends in 2001 and in 2001, I think I'll retire."

"I'll go back to live in Africa with my family. I've got a thousand different things to do and every so often I'll make a trip to New York."

Weah hopes to be fit for Sunday's big clash with Juventus in Turin, a happy hunting ground for the centre-forward, whose two goals there last season earned Milan a crucial win on the road to the league title.

any favourites, because they too will be looking to win. But beating Juventus could be an important step for us."

However, the man from Monrovia also admitted having a weak spot for the Turin club ever since his youth.

"Juventus have always been my second team," he told the Gazzetta dello Sport. "Back home, they were the only team you could see on Liberian television. I discovered AC Milan when I moved to Monte Carlo, but I still kept supporting Juve."

World club championship Romario joins Saudis

RIYADH, Nov 17: Brazilian veteran striker Romario is set to appear for Saudi side Al-Nassr in January's world club championship in Brazil it emerged here Tuesday, reports AFP.

Romario, a World Cup winner in 1994, was sacked by his Brazilian club Flamengo for "indiscipline" Monday after attending a party on the eve of an important club match.

Al-Nassr, who have signed Romario on a three-month deal, will compete against Spain's Real Madrid, Brazil's Corinthians and an as yet unnamed African side in Group A of the championship, which will also feature European champions Manchester United.

Biman take the lead

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh Biman gained a solo lead in the First Division chess league with a 3-1 win over Sonali Bank in the second round, played at the NSC chess room yesterday.

In day's matches, Biman's three International Masters Ziaur Rahman, Reefat-bin-Sattar and Abdullah Al-Rakib won their boards against Bank's Ahmedur Rahman, Mahub Ali and Din Mohammad respectively. Aminul Islam earned some solace for the bankers when he beat Fide Master Zezul Haque.

Biman, with their second win, notched the top spot of the 12-team league, collecting 7 out of maximum eight points. The national airlines outplayed Brothers Union in the first round by four points to nil.

Holders Loenne Chess Club and Titas Club were trailing Biman on completion of the second round, with each having collected 6.5 points.

Loenne beat Narayangaj Zilla Daba Kheulwar Samiti by 2.5-1.5 points while Titas Club posted a 3.5-0.5 win over Nakhapara Jubo Kalyan Sangha.

Utara Central Chess Club beat Brothers Union by 3-1 points while Farashganj Sporting Club and Ansars beat Dhaka University and Kalyan Kamalapur Sama Kalyan Sangha respectively by an identical 2.5-1.5 margin.

The other match between Mahakhal Prodeep Sangha and Touchstone Club ended in a 2-2 draw.

TODAY'S MATCHES
(Round 3)
Nakhapara JKS v Utara CCC
Mahakhal PS v Titas Club
Narayanganj v Touchstone Club
Farashganj SC v Loenne CC
Dhaka University v Kamalapur SKS
Biman v Ansars
Brothers Union v Sonali Bank

Sheffield Shield becoming Pura Milk Cup

HOBART, Nov 17: Australia's 107-year-old domestic cricket competition was consigned to the history books today when the Australian Cricket Board announced it had sold the Sheffield Shield to a dairy company, reports Reuters.

ACB chairman Malcolm Speed said the annual summer competition between Australia's first-class state teams would continue unchanged but the time-honoured Sheffield Shield trophy would be retired to a museum and replaced by the Pura Milk Cup in a multi-million dollar four-year deal.

Speed said there was a sense of regret that the century old competition had lost its name but said the move was necessary to help secure the financial security of Australia's most productive cricket nursery.

"We consulted widely on this issue with current and past players, cricket administrators, cricket supporters, the media and other cricket stakeholders during our 12-month strategic planning process," Speed said.

"The overwhelming feedback was that the most important issue confronting the Sheffield Shield was not its name but rather to preserve and strengthen the integrity of the competition itself."

The Shield was originally named after Lord Sheffield, who donated a cash sum to make a trophy commemorating Australia's best domestic teams after a visit by an English side captained by W G Grace in 1891-92.

But for all its tradition and success in producing quality players, the competition has long been a financial burden to the ACB, losing several million dollars annually for the last few years.

Under the terms of the deal, the dairy company has agreed not to change the format of the competition with games to continue over four days.

Australia's Test captain Steve Waugh said he had no objections to renaming the competition but said he would have hoped that the trophy could have stayed the same.

"It would be a shame if the trophy is lost to cricket because it's a great trophy," he said.

Shane, Glenn's county deals in question

SYDNEY, Nov 17: Shane Warne and Glenn McGrath, English county cricket's star recruits, may be forced to renegotiate their contracts after the Australian Cricket Board decided to play three one-dayers indoors against South Africa in August, reports AFP.

Warne has signed for Hampshire and McGrath Worcestershire.

Both contracts are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars and based on the premise that the players were available for a full season.

But an historic decision to play cricket indoors during the Australian winter means their availability may be cut by as much as two months.

"Obviously it's something I've got to talk over with Worcestershire now," said McGrath.

"My main priority is always the Australian team. They know that and I'm sure the Australian board and selectors know that."

Graf given farewell



NEW YORK, Nov 17 (AP): Steffi Graf stood on Centre Court at Madison Square Garden one more time Tuesday night, the spotlight shining on her career this time.

"You have been a role model for all those who love sports," Judy Levering labelled the German legend.

Surrounded by a number of other players, Graf was honoured for a career that spanned 17 years and produced 107 tournament titles, including 22 Grand Slam singles crowns.

Among the many gifts she received were the door to her

locker, No 19, at the French Open, and a picture taken by her favourite photographer, Peter Beard.

And a banner inscribed with her name and the years she won the season-ending WTA Tour event played at the Garden was raised to the rafters, joining the one honouring Martina Navratilova. Theirs are the only two banners that do not belong to members of either the New York Knicks or the Rangers, the two teams that call the arena home.

"You came back dramatically from many injuries to make a strong sport even stronger," said Bart McGuire, chief executive officer of the

WTA Tour. "You've been great fun to watch."

The appreciative Garden crowd agreed, greeting Graf with a standing ovation that lasted until they turned up the lights in the arena. It almost brought her to tears, as did the flood of memories that came when a video of her career was shown, accompanied by Whitney Houston's version of "One Moment in Time."

"I've had so many of those," Graf said.

She said there were too many people to thank individually, but mentioned her parents — her mother Heidi was sitting in the stands — and her coach, Heinz Gunthardt.

"I don't only call you a coach," she told Gunthardt. "I call you a friend, too."

Then, after a pause, she said, "I knew I would get emotional."

Dave Checketts, president of Madison Square Garden, presented Graf with a Rangers jersey with the No 5 and her name on the back. He explained the 5 was the number of season-ending championships she had won at the Garden.

He also presented her with a basketball signed by the Knicks — one of her favourite athletes is Knicks centre Patrick Ewing — and a Knicks sweatshirt, along with a diamond pendant.

Levering and Geoff Pollard, president of Tennis Australia, represented the four Grand Slam tournaments. Besides the locker door from Paris, she received a picture from the Australian Open, a framed record of every match she played at Wimbledon from the All England Club, and a plaque from the US Open that included a picture of Graf along with a piece of the court from Louis Armstrong Stadium where she won several of her titles.

Her fellow players each presented her with an autographed racquet and former Knicks stars Earl Monroe and Dave Debusschere helped raise her banner.

During her thank you speech, a fan bellowed, "Where's Andre?" referring to Andre Agassi, Graf's romantic interest.

"He's probably at home watching," she said.

Then she turned to the crowd again.

"Thanks to everybody who has made my life very special," Graf said. "I'll miss you all."



German tennis legend Steffi Graf (L) holding a plaque with her picture on it during a retirement ceremony in her honour at New York on November 16. The plaque was presented by the United States Tennis Association (USTA) president Judy Levering (R). — AFP photo

Real Madrid fire Toshack



MADRID, Nov 17: Real Madrid finally ran out of patience and sacked their out-of-favour coach John Toshack, the ailing Spanish giants announced here Wednesday, reports AFP.

In a statement Real thanked the Welshman for his services, and named his successor as Vicente del Bosque, a former player with the capital club.

Del Bosque, a member of Real's technical side, has already had a stint in charge, standing in as temporary coach sandwiched between the reigns of Benito Floro and Jorge Valdano in 1994.

Toshack becomes the seventh Real Madrid trainer to be kicked out since Lorenzo Sanz took over as president in 1995.

His days had looked numbered after a winless run in domestic competition stretching back to August 29.

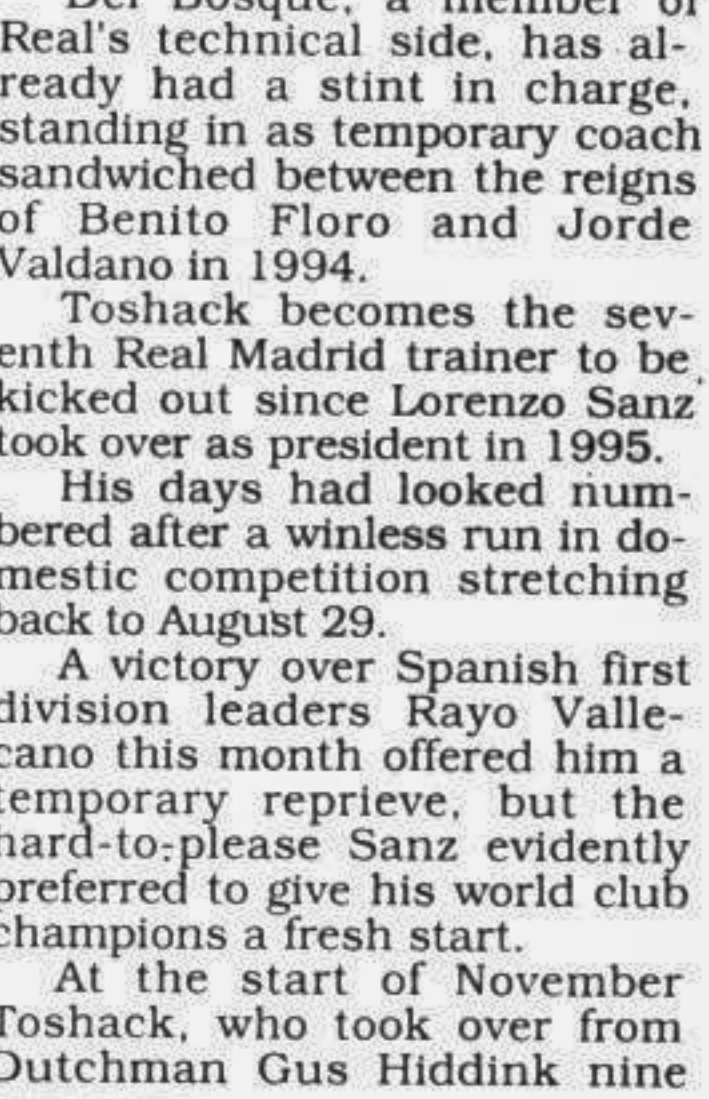
A victory over Spanish first division leaders Rayo Vallecano this month offered him a temporary reprieve, but the hard-to-please Sanz evidently preferred to give his world club champions a fresh start.

At the start of November Toshack, who took over from Dutchman Gus Hiddink nine

months ago, was given a vote of confidence by the Real board — but in the idiosyncratic world of football a vote of confidence is often the equivalent of a kiss of death.

And so it proved. Toshack was being hung, drawn and quartered by the Spanish press, with sports paper As leading the assault: "Toshack has proved he is nothing and that everything he touches he spoils."

About the only thing going



JOHN TOSHACK

for Toshack was that 'the meringues' were guaranteed a place in the next phase of the European Champions League.

But Sanz always judged his coaches by a domestic yardstick.

In 1998 he sacked German Jupp Heynckes hours after victory in the European Cup Final. Last year he fired Hiddink just weeks after Real became world club champions.

Toshack, in Sanz's eyes and those of Real's fanatical fans, has failed to justify the huge overhaul of the team he began in the summer.

He offloaded players such as Davor Suker (to Arsenal) and Predrag Mijatovic (to Fiorentina) and spent a fortune on players including French striker Nicolas Anelka, who joined the club from English side Arsenal for 37 million dollars.

Anelka has yet to score a goal for his new team.

Toshack did not help his cause either when allegedly criticising stand-in goalkeeper Albano Bizzari after the Rayo match.

He was fined 6,000 dollars for claiming the club had "a problem in goal".

Real are lying eighth in the league.

Zelic won't play for Farina again



MELBOURNE, Australia, Nov 17: Key midfielder Ned Zelic quit international soccer here Wednesday.

Zelic returned late Wednesday to Germany where he plays for 1860 Munich after his shock omission from the national side to play the second international against Brazil on Wednesday.

The gifted Zelic had the feeling at training this week that his international career was at the crossroads and when he was dropped for the first time since 1991 he made up his mind that he no longer wanted to play for Australia.

"It is something that has been building up while I've been in camp, not for the whole camp. I kind of had the feeling that the coach Farina was not 100 percent behind me," Zelic said.

Farina, in only the second game in charge of the Socceroos, dropped Zelic as he wanted to play Brazil without a sweeper and experiment with his line-up.

Zelic expected to become skipper when Farina took over, but when told the coach was reworking the side's formation he realised not only that he would not be captain but his place in the side was no longer assured.

Farina said the captaincy was not an important matter at this time, it obviously was to Zelic and being dropped was the final insult.

The new coach said Zelic's departure was regrettable but he argued he had explained to the players that he was experimenting with his lineup.

Farina's experiment meant that Australia would play without a sweeper and Zelic would have to compete with Paul Okon for the central midfield role.

Zelic acknowledged that the 2002 World Cup qualifying campaign hinged on just who Farina picked for Wednesday's game.

"There's no doubt that's the key to this team, and probably the key to our World Cup chances," Zelic said.

"He (Farina) is talking about introducing a back four, and if that happens then both Paul Okon and I won't be able to play back, because we're not the type of players that mark the forwards."

"I don't know if we can both play in midfield, that's something that he is going to have to decide," he said.

Farina said: "I explained to Ned yesterday that he's an important part of what we're doing. I know exactly what he's capable of and not to look at this in any other way."

"On the question of Ned making himself available for Australia again, that again is

question that only the player can answer."

Farina's problems aren't over there with part-time Socceroo Harry Kewell destined to play for Leeds United in the Yorkshire derby against Bradford City this weekend in another club-versus-country row.

He did not report for international duty in the two-match series against Brazil after his club said he was injured.

Schofield shines for England A

CHR