

Rain rules at Harare

HARARE, Dec 7: The fourth day of the third and final cricket Test between Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka was abandoned in mid-afternoon here today following persistent bad light and drizzle, reports AFP.

The umpires, Ian Robinson of Zimbabwe and Srinivas Venkataraghavan of India, called off play for the day when the ground was clearly becoming waterlogged.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day of the final Test between Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka on Monday:

ZIMBABWE: First innings 218 (R. Pushpakumara 5/56)				
SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 159-7)				
Atapattu c Johnson b Olonga	0			
Arnold not out	104			
Jwardena c Goodwin b Brandes	2			
Jayasuriya c A Flower b Strang	4			
Dilshan c A Flower b Strang	37			
Kwathara c A Flower b G Whittall	7			
De Saram c G Flower b G Whittall	38			
Vaas c Campbell b Brandes	0			
Pkumara lbw b Strang	7			
Wsinghe c A Flower b Olonga	18			
Mtharara c Olonga	6			
Extras: (lb-2; nb-5; w-2)	9			
Total: (All out in 88.4 overs) 231				
Fall of wickets: 1-1; 2-4; 3-29; 4-82; 5-90; 6-158; 7-159; 8-178; 9-208.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Olonga	22.4	2	54	3
Brandes	17	5	45	3
Strang	24	8	71	2
G Whittall	17	9	37	2
Price	8	3	22	0

ZIMBABWE: Second innings				
G Flower c Dilshan b Vaas	13			
Wishart b Vaas	9			
Goodwin not out	15			
Johnson not out	9			
Extras: (lb-1; nb-1)	2			
Total: (For two wickets in 23.4 overs) 48				
Fall of wickets: 1-14; 2-28				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	10.4	3	23	2
Pkumara	7	2	15	0
Wsinghe	6	3	9	0

Las Vegas don't like Tyson!

LAS VEGAS, Dec 7 (AP): Nevada boxing officials aren't the only ones who want Mike Tyson to fight elsewhere. Most residents don't want him here, either.

Six out of 10 Las Vegas residents said in a recent poll that they are opposed to Tyson fighting in their city again. But Tyson's promoter dismissed the poll results.

"Certainly, this poll, whether the results came out in Mike's behalf or not, will have no effect on whether or when Mike fights in Nevada again," said Dan Goossen of America Presents.

The survey, conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling on November 22-23 and November 29-December 1, asked 632 registered voters what they thought of Tyson returning to the ring in Las Vegas.

Of those polled, 59 per cent were opposed to his return, while 28 per cent said they would support allowing him to box here. Another 13 per cent were undecided. The survey's margin of error is plus or minus 5.7 per cent.

Tyson was told by the Nevada Athletic Commission that it might be better if he fought elsewhere in the near future after he hit Orlin Norris after the bell rang to end the first round of their fight last October 23 fight at the MGM Grand hotel-casino.

The promoter's end to the fight followed Tyson's biting of Evander Holyfield's ears in the same ring in 1997, and his admission that he tried to break Francois Botha's arm during their fight last January 16.

Sicily honours Muhammad Ali

COMISO, Sicily, Dec 7: Muhammad Ali was a hit in Sicily.

The former heavyweight champion, now slowed by Parkinson's disease, was awarded honorary citizenship of the southern Sicily town of Comiso on Monday, reports AP.

Alli, who often tours the globe as an envoy for peace, was on the island for a conference on peace talks for the east African nation of Burundi.

He attended a brief town hall ceremony in Comiso, a town of about 25,000 people. A few hundred fans greeted Ali, who responded by throwing phantom punches.

The conference, "Prospects for peace and solidarity in Burundi," brought together representatives of rival forces to sign a document vowing to respect the neutrality of schools and hospitals in Burundi's civil war.

Fighting between government forces and Hutu rebels has killed more than 200,000 people since 1993.

Alli is slated to travel Tuesday to Rome, where he won the light heavyweight gold medal at the 1960 Summer Olympics.

Johnson dead

ATLANTIC CITY, New Jersey, Dec 7: Boxer Stephan Johnson has died after failing to regain consciousness from a brain injury in a November 20 fight, reports AP.

The 31-year-old Johnson died Sunday evening at a hospital, the Atlantic County medical examiner said.

Johnson, of New York, was taken to the hospital on a stretcher after being knocked out by Paul Vaden in the 10th round of a USBA junior middleweight title fight.

He bled between his brain and his skull, with swelling on the left side of the brain. Doctors drilled two holes in his skull to drain some fluid, relieving pressure, but he remained in critical condition, hooked up to respirator for weeks.



German tennis legend Steffi Graf speaking during an International Olympic Committee ceremony in Lausanne, Switzerland on December 6. Graf was awarded by the IOC for her outstanding contribution to the world of tennis. —AFP photo

Associated Press opinion poll

Graf, Laver the greatest

NEW YORK, Dec 7: Rod Laver beat out the player who grew up idolizing him, Pete Sampras, as the Associated Press men's tennis player of the century, and Steffi Graf edged Martina Navratilova as the top women's player.

Laver, an Australian, received three first-place votes and a total of 47 points from a six-member panel of experts assembled by The AP, while Sampras received no first-place votes and 39 points.

Bill Tilden, who dominated men's play in the 1920s, finished third with the help of one first-place vote.

Dubbed the "Rocket," Laver is the only double Grand Slammer in history. He won the Australian, French, Wimbledon and US titles in 1962 as an amateur, then repeated the feat in 1969 as a pro.

He attacked the net relentlessly, yet possessed a potent all-around game from the baseline.

Laver won the Australian singles title three times, the French twice, Wimbledon four times, and the US twice.

He probably would have won many more majors but was banned from the Grand Slam events in his prime after he turned pro in 1963. He did not return to the majors until the 1969 era in 1968, then he promptly won Wimbledon for the third time.

Sampras always existed Laver as his favourite player, admiring the competitiveness of his game, his aggressive style on court, and his gentlemanly demeanor off court.

Although Sampras owns 12 major singles titles, including six at Wimbledon, he has never gone beyond the semifinals in 10 appearances at the French Open. That failure on clay led one voter to omit him from the top 10 list, while another rated him only No 5.

Bjorn Borg of Sweden and winner of five straight Wimbledon titles from 1976 to 1980, finished fourth, followed by Don Budge, the first player to complete a Grand Slam in 1938.

John McEnroe and Lew Hoad of Australia, tied for sixth place. Roy Emerson and Ken Rosewall, both Australians, tied for eighth and Jack Kramer finished 10th.

Hoad and Pancho Gonzales, scintillating players in the

1950s who limited their play in majors by turning pro in their prime, each garnered one first-place vote.

In the women's poll, Graf and Navratilova were separated by a point, 52-51, and were followed by Margaret Smith Court, Billie Jean King, Chris Evert, Suzanne Lenglen of France, Helen Wills Moody, Maureen Connolly, Monica Seles of Yugoslavia, and a tie for No 10 between Evonne Goolagong of Australia and Martina Hingis of Switzerland.

Graf, of Germany, retired at 30 in 1999 after her emotional victory at the French Open, her sixth at Roland Garros, and a runner-up finish at Wimbledon, where she had won seven times. She is the only player to complete a Golden Slam — winning the four majors and the Olympics in 1988.

Four voters ranked Graf No 1, one listed Navratilova, a Czech native, as the best, and another put King at the top, in part because of her influence on the game as the founder of the WTA Tour.

The AP panel included six players whose careers spanned six decades: Ted Schroeder, Fred Stolle, Barry MacKay, Pam Shriver, Wendy Turnbull and Virginia Wade. Turnbull and Stolle are Australian, while Wade is from England.

"Ranking players of different eras is completely subjective," said Schroeder, who won the US title in 1942 and Wimbledon in 1949 and has been a keen observer of the sport ever since.

"My selections are based on the varying conditions, equipment and levels of competition in their respective eras."

Among the surprises in the voting were the low regard the panelists had for Ivan Lendl, who dominated the 1980s with eight major singles titles at the Australian, French and US Open, and two runner-up finishes at Wimbledon. One panelist ranked him No seven, another No 9, and the others left him off their lists entirely.

Andre Agassi, the only man to complete a career Golden Slam by winning the four majors and the Olympic gold, also failed to make the top 10 as he totaled 10 points, with no votes higher than No 7.

Others receiving votes were Jimmy Connors, Fred Perry,

John Newcombe, Jean Borotra, Rene Lacoste and Arthur Ashe. Other women who received votes were Althea Gibson, Maria Bueno, Alice Marble, Tracy Austin, Doris Hart, Helen Jacobs, and Lindsay Davenport.

AP panel

NEW YORK, Dec 7: Members of the panel that selected the top 10 greatest male and female tennis players of the century for the Associated Press:

PAM SHRIVER: In 1978, youngest US Open finalist at 16 years, 2 months, and only amateur female finalist in open era. Won Olympic gold in doubles with Zina Garrison. Joined with Martina Navratilova as all-time doubles team, winning 20 majors, Grand Slam in 1984, and 79 titles altogether.

WENDY TURNBULL: The "Babbitt" was noted for speed, exceptional volley. Only Australian other than Margaret Smith Court and Evonne Goolagong to make three major singles finals: the Australian in 1980, the French in 1979, and the US in 1977. Major titles (9): French doubles, 1979; Wimbledon doubles, 1979; US doubles, 1979, 82; plus five mixed doubles.

VIRGINIA WADE: A decade after winning first US Open, won Wimbledon in 1977, nine days shy of 32nd birthday. Won 55 singles titles as a pro. Played Wimbledon a record 26 years. Major titles (7): Australian singles, 1972; Wimbledon singles, 1977; US singles, 1967; Australian doubles, 1973; French doubles 1973; US doubles, 1973, 75.

TED SCHROEDER: In 1942 won the US intercollegiate and US singles titles in the same year. Major titles (6): Wimbledon singles, 1949; US singles, 1942; US doubles, 1940, '41 '47; US mixed 1942.

FRED STOLLE: Won US singles title unseeded in 1966. Major titles (18): French singles, 1965; US singles, 1966; French doubles, 1965, '68; US doubles, 1965, '66, '69; Australian doubles, 1963, '64, '66; Wimbledon doubles, 1962, '64; Australian mixed, 1962; Wimbledon mixed, 1961, '64, '69; US mixed, 1962, 1965.

BARRY MACKEY: US Davis Cup player, tournament promoter and television commentator.

Proteas beef up bowling

PORT ELIZABETH, South Africa, Dec 7: South Africa are expected to strengthen their fast bowling attack for the second Test against England starting at St George's Park Thursday, reports AFP.

Mornantau Hayward, the Eastern Province tearaway, could make his Test debut on his home ground if South Africa opt for pure pace. Hayward, 22, is the leading wicket-taker in South African first-class cricket this season with 36 in six matches, including 22 in two games at St George's Park.

Hayward is an out-and-out fast bowler, who has been timed as being quicker than South African match-winner Allan Donald.

South Africa crushed England by an innings and 21 runs in the first Test at the Wanderers in Johannesburg last month, with fast bowlers Donald and Shaun Pollock doing the damage. Donald had match figures of 11 for 127, while Pollock took eight for 80.

South African captain Hansie Cronje admitted, however, that his new ball pair, ranked second and first among world Test bowlers, had carried too heavy a load. "There were times when if Allan or Shaun weren't bowling we didn't create enough pressure," said Cronje.

Although South Africa will be reluctant to change a winning team, the inability of Jacques Kallis to bowl because of knee injury has affected the balance of the side. Kallis, a key batsman, has been ruled out of bowling in Port Elizabeth by a doctor.

Hayward and seamer David Terbrugge were both added to the team that won in Johannesburg, with the side to be finalised on the morning of the match.

St George's Park has favoured pace bowling in the past three seasons, with batsmen struggling to post totals of 200, but David Emslie, chief executive of Eastern Province cricket, said he expected a more batsman-friendly pitch this time.

Emslie admitted that his union had lost financially when last season's Test match against the West Indies had finished in three days, which meant no lucrative Sunday gate takings.

Rajshahi cricket

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAH, Dec 7: Prottoy Sporting Club defeated Bijo Ekadosh by nine wickets in the fifth Bir Shrestha Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Smriti cricket tournament today at Railway ground.

Put into bat, Bijo Ekadosh made 109 for nine in allotted 25 overs.

Happy, Russel, Upel and Milon contributed 22, 18, 14 and 14.

Sagor was the most successful bowler taking three for 48 for Prottoy while Milon and Chana claimed one wicket each.

In reply, the winners reached the target in 19.4 overs for the loss of one wicket.

Chana with an unbeaten 60 and Bappy 25 were the major scorers.

Premiership Hammers hold Spurs

LONDON, Dec 7: An outstanding goalkeeping performance by West Ham's Shaka Hislop after his side were reduced to 10 men before half-time denied Tottenham Hotspur here on Monday as their Premiership match ended 0-0, reports AFP.

Spurs, who have lost four of their last seven matches, stayed in seventh place, while West Ham, who failed to break their away goal drought that has lasted since August 28, moved up to eighth.

Hislop, the former Reading and Newcastle United goalkeeper, came to their rescue after Northern Irish international midfielder Steve Lomas was controversially expelled a minute before the break for his second bookable offence.

Lomas was given his marching orders by referee Peter Jones, who did not have a clear view of the incident, after missing the ball and kicking diminutive Portuguese midfielder Jose Dominguez - minutes after he had been booked for engaging in a war of words with the same player.

Lomas, soon to face a Football Association misconduct charge for remarks made to a referee after a match earlier this season, became the third Hammers player to be sent off at White Hart Lane in as many visits.

Spurs' best effort came on the hour when Tim Sherwood's five metres volley forced Hislop into a brilliant one handed save.

Minutes later West Ham midfielder Trevor Sinclair saved the Hammers when he nipped in to rob Norwegian international Oyvind Leonhardsen just two metres out.

West Ham's woes continued apace as their inspirational Chilean central defender Javier Margas was forced to go off with what looked like a hamstring injury.

However, West Ham hit back and Cameron international Marc Vivien Foe should have done better as his point blank shot from just two metres out was blocked by keeper Ian Walker, who went down well a minute later to save a fierce long range drive from Frank Lampard.

Hislop was back in action soon afterwards producing another fine save to deny Chris Perry's powerful header and four minutes from time pulled off the save of the night turning Chris Armstrong's bullet like header into the post.

MU face unconquered Valencia

PARIS, Dec 7: A week after adding the unofficial world championship to their European and English titles Manchester United go into Wednesday's European Champions League battle with Spain's Group B leaders Valencia knowing that defeat will loosen their grip on the trophy, reports AFP.

Fiorentina, who beat United in Group B last time out, make the trip to France where they will play French champions Bordeaux.

Victory would see the Italians in command of the pool if a depleted Valencia slip up in Manchester.

In Group A Spanish champions Barcelona, seen by many as the principal challengers to United, are also in need of a victory at home to Sparta Prague with Portugal's Porto, currently in charge of that pool, host Germany's Hertha Berlin.

United, also the English FA Cup holders, may be basking in the glow of being the first club team from England to rule the world following their 1-0 Intercontinental Cup Final win over Palmeiras of Brazil last week.

That earned them the accolade of world's best although in January that title will be up for grabs when FIFA stage their first official eight-team World Club Championship in Brazil, in which teams from all the continents take part.

But for many of the United fans the ultimate prize remains the European Cup they won in such dramatic circumstances last May when injury time goals from Teddy Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer snatched victory from the jaws of defeat against Bayern Munich.

United, still waiting for their matchwinner against Palmeiras Roy Keane to decide whether to stay at the club, know three points at home is essential against Valencia.

It was a rare blunder from Irishman Keane that allowed Fiorentina's man with the golden gun, Argentine Gabriel Batistuta, to inspire the Tuscans to a 2-0 win in the opening second phase match a fortnight ago.

A second bungle by Norwe-

gian Henning Berg allowed another Argentine Abel Balbo to make it 2-0.

After their exertions against Palmeiras in Tokyo United boss Sir Alex Ferguson rested key trio Andy Cole, Dwight Yorke and David Beckham for Saturday's home game with Everton.

But United romped through that match, winning 5-1 in stand-in Solskjaer bagging four goals and the Norwegian could be in contention against Valencia.

Sir Alex said: "It will be a tough decision whatever I decide."

One of the architects of United's win in Tokyo - Australian goalkeeper Mark Bosnich - will miss the Valencia match, however.

He had to leave the field early in the match against Everton and will be replaced by Dutchman Raimond van der Gouw between the sticks against the Spaniards.

Valencia, meanwhile, were hugely impressive with their 3-0 defeat of Bordeaux in their opener. They have proved one of the surprise packages in this year's tournament, winning a first round group including Bayern Munich, Glasgow Rangers and PSV Eindhoven.

Their talisman is another Argentinian hitman Claudio Lopez, who was in superb form again at the weekend when Valencia beat Seville 2-0.

Valencia's Argentinian coach Hector Cuper, who guided Real Mallorca to the Cup Winners Cup final last season, has injury problems ahead of the match with the reigning champions.

Strikers Kily Gonzalez and Romanian Adrian Ilie are ruled out while goalkeeper Santiago Canizares and French defender Alain Roche are also absentees. Their promising young midfielder Gerard Lopez is suspended.

Fiorentina are still on a high after their defeat of United and built on that with an impressive 2-1 defeat of Italian champions AC Milan at the weekend with Batistuta again prominent.

Bordeaux are in an even worse plight than United although at least they halted their

winless streak in domestic football at the weekend when they defeated Montpellier 2-0.

But they do without defender Jerome Bonissel and midfielder Stephane Ziani, who both joined the French champions from Spain's Deportivo La Coruna in the summer.

Better news for Baup is the return to fitness of French international forward Lilian Laslandes, who will resume his prolific partnership both for club and country with Sylvain Wiltord.

In Group A it is Porto, who won this tournament in 1987, who are currently in charge. The club that has won the last five Portuguese titles is also back at the head of the top flight in that country this weekend.

Their coach Fernando Santos is blessed by an injury-free squad and is likely to stick with the line-up that beat Santa Clara at home on Saturday.

They won their Group A opener against Sparta Prague 3-0 and another triumph at home to Berlin will give them a real lift.

Berlin will be handicapped by the absence of their young prodigy Sebastian Deisler while Hungarian international Pal Dardai will be another absentee because of an ankle injury.

The Germans have been in indifferent form although a 3-0 win over struggling SSV Ulm at the weekend lifted their flagging Bundesliga campaign.

Barcelona, who drew their opener with Berlin, know that all three points are a pre-requisite at home to Sparta Prague if they want to stay in contention for a second European crown to add to the one they won in 1992.

The Catalan giants ended a blank run in Spain's Primera Liga with a 3-2 win over Oviedo in which Portuguese ace Luis Figo was their outstanding player even if the goals were scored by Dutchmen Phillip Cocu and Patrick Kluivert.

Cocu is suffering with a stomach complaint but should be fit to face the Czech outfit.

Prague coach Ivan Hasek signalled that his team would play a tight game at the Nou Camp, knowing that the pressure is on Barca to win the game.

WC 2006

Olympic style voting for venue

TOKYO, Dec 7: FIFA will decide which country hosts the 2006 World Cup on the basis of an Olympic-style vote in a move that could affect South Africa's chances of bringing the tournament to Africa for the first time, reports AFP.

FIFA President Joseph Blatter said here Tuesday that football's world governing body's executive committee would make the decision in a secret ballot in Zurich on July 5/6 next year.

If none of the five bidding countries manages to secure majority backing on the first vote, the country with the lowest number of votes will be eliminated and a second round of voting held.

The elimination process continues until one candidate obtains an overall majority. In the event of a tie between the

two final candidates, Blatter will have the casting vote. FIFA's executive committee has 24 voting members, including the president.

Five or more countries are equal in the second round of voting, a fresh vote will be held to decide which one is eliminated.

South Africa's main rivals to host the competition are seen as England and Germany. Brazil and Morocco have also tabled bids.

South Africa started the race as favourite because of the widely held belief that a World Cup in Africa is overdue.

A decision by FIFA to award the tournament to the country with the biggest bloc of support on a first vote would have boosted its chances of success.

An elimination-based system increases the chances of it being denied because of concerns about its high crime record. England in particular had been lobbying hard for the vote to be conducted along the lines approved by FIFA on Tuesday.

South Africa's bid did receive a boost however when Blatter reiterated his view that the tournament should go to Africa in 2006.

The FIFA President said that, as the bidding process was underway, he had to adopt a neutral stance and give all the candidates a fair chance to promote their bids.

He then added: "But I've not changed my mind."

England and Germany's bids have both been dead on technical grounds by FIFA inspection committees. Officials will visit the other three countries early next year, Blatter said.

Danny Jordaan, the head of South Africa's bidding committee, played down concerns over

the crime rate -- which it is feared would deter many fans from making the trip to the World Cup.

"Since our readmission to the international sporting community, we have organised 55 international events watched by 1.4 million people and there has not been a single incident," he told a presentation to journalists here for the qualifying draw for the 2002 World Cup.

Either parade or celebration

SYDNEY, Dec 7: Victory parade fatigue in Sydney means Australia's Davis Cup champions are likely to miss out on celebrations in the city, reports AFP.

Sydney City Council spokesman Geoffrey Williams said today he doubted the streets of Sydney would be closed for the fourth parade this year.

The world champion rugby union, cricket and netball teams have all been given ticker-tape parades but the tennis players are unlikely to enjoy the same honour.

Williams said they cost the council between 60,000-70,000 dollars (38,000-45,000 US) each excluding the cost of police and street cleaning.

He said an "extraordinary 12 months of Australian sport meant Sydney had been overwhelmed by parades."

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