

England 113/2

EAST LONDON, South Africa, Dec 20: England's batting problems worsened on Sunday as opener Mark Butcher failed yet again and Michael Vaughan, one of their few successes, sustained a bad finger injury, reports Reuters.

Darren Maddy, Butcher's main rival for the opening berth, also managed only 14 as England reached 113 for two in reply to the 384 posted by a combined Border/Eastern Province XI before rain ended play at tea on the second day of their four-day match.

With the third Test against South Africa only six days away, England were hoping for a good performance from at least one of their openers.

But Butcher was dismissed for a duck, caught in the slips in the opening over of England's

Day Three rained off

EAST LONDON, South Africa, Dec 20 (AFP): Rain washed out the third day of a four-day fixture here on Monday between the touring English side and a combined Border/Eastern Province XI.

Play would resume on Tuesday morning if the weather allowed, an official said.

England were on 113 for two at the close of play on Sunday in reply to the combined team's first innings of 383. Batsmen Chris Adams (59) and Alec Stewart (16) were the not out batsmen.

Innings and Maddy, who scored 133 in a one-day match on Thursday to push his Test claims, fared little better.

It was the injury to Vaughan that will be of most concern to coach Duncan Fletcher. Having scored just seven, the in-form Vaughan was struck on the right index finger by a rising delivery from seamer Garnett Kruger.

The initial diagnosis was severe bruising but Vaughan is unlikely to take any part in the rest of the match and is to undergo further tests on Tuesday to ensure there is no fracture.

The combined XI earlier added only 53 more runs for the loss of their last five wickets after they had resumed on 331 for five.

Piet Strydom top scored with a measured 86 off 173 balls which included 15 boundaries while left-arm spinner Robin Peterson also weighed in with a gusty 42 off 53 balls as seamers Gavin Hamilton and Chris Silverwood wrapped up the tail.

Test discard Hamilton finished with the best bowling figures of three for 61 while Alex Tudor was expensive as he ended with three for 72 in 15.1 overs.

Suruj Ali cricket

Sports Reporter

The Suruj Ali Master smriti cricket tournament got underway at Tongi yesterday.

Joymoni Eleven won the opening match against the aspirant nine runs. Earlier, industrialist HM Kabir declared the meet open in a colourful ceremony.

Rajshahi soccer

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Dec 20: Abahani Krira Chakra defeated Alif Lam Mim Club 2-0 in the First Division football league organised by Rajshahi District Sports Association played at the Rajshahi A H M Kamruzzaman Stadium.

Kamal opened the account in the 11th minute and Tapos scored the second goal in the 72nd minute.

Mahammedan Sporting Club will take on Upashar Sporting Club tomorrow.

NSW thrive on Brett power

PERTH, Australia, Dec 20 (AFP): Another fiery spell of pace bowling by Test aspirant Brett Lee spearheaded New South Wales to outright victory over reigning champions Western Australia in a Sheffield Shield game ending here Monday.

Lee, who had taken four wickets in the first innings, snapped up 4-55 as Western Australia collapsed for a second innings 164, giving New South Wales their first outright win of the season.

Lee is a strong contender for selection in the Australian side to meet India in the second Test starting in Melbourne on Boxing Day (December 26).

Former Test leg-spinner Stuart MacGill also made a major hole in the Western Australian batting, taking 4-42.

It was Western Australia's fourth outright loss in four games -- their worst losing sequence in almost 40 years.

Soccer boss faces child abuse trial

LIVERPOOL, England, Dec 20 (Reuters): Southampton Football Club manager Dave Jones was ordered by a British court on Monday to stand trial for child abuse after denying fresh charges dating from when he worked in a care home in the 1980s.

Through his solicitors Jones denied three new counts of abuse at a hearing at Liverpool magistrates court. He must now appear at the city's Crown Court to answer more than 12 charges of abuse.

The former Everton defender and 43-year-old father of four has denied all charges against him and spoke in court on Monday only to confirm his name.



Action from yesterday's Cute First Division handball league match between Prime Sporting Club and Arambagh Krira Sangha at the court near Bangabandhu National Stadium.

Ind-Tas 4-dayer drawn

HOBART, Australia, Dec 20 (AFP): The uncertain future of wicketkeeper Nayan Mongia kept the touring Indians on tenterhooks as the four-day match against Tasmania was drawn here today.

Both the Indian board and the team management passed the buck around on whether Mongia, a late addition to the touring squad, should be retained for the rest of the series.

Mongia, a veteran of 40 Tests, joined the Indians just before the first Test following a knee injury to first-choice wicket-keeper Manav Prasad.

But when Prasad recovered enough to play the Test, the team management asked the board to decide whether Mongia should be sent home.

Board secretary Jayawant Lele confused matters today by insisting the team produce Prasad's fitness certificate -- nearly a week after he played the first Test in Adelaide.

Coach Kapil Dev said he had requested Sydney surgeon Michael Johnson, who first examined Prasad last month, to fax him a letter certifying the player's fitness.

"The decision on whether Mongia stays on the tour will be taken by the board," Kapil said. "They've asked us for Prasad's fitness certificate. We will send it to them in the next few days."

Kapil himself was surprised at the Board's insistence on a certificate even though Prasad had played the first Test.

"I think they want to make sure Prasad is fit enough, before they decide on Mongia," he said. "As far as I am concerned, I don't mind having Mongia for the rest of the series. But the fact remains that Prasad is absolutely fit."

Mongia, whose only outing on the tour so far has been the game against Tasmania, was understandably peeved.

"This is all very frustrating," he said. "I don't know what is my status in this team."

"If they don't want to keep me, let them tell me. I'll take the first flight home. But why keep me waiting?"

"I am not a youngster on his first trip. I have played 40 Tests in the last eight years. It's not a good feeling to be unwanted," Mongia said.

Lele said the board may take up to a week to take a decision on Mongia, by which time the first of the two back-to-back Tests would have started.

The match, meanwhile, petered out tamely after the hosts, resuming at 472-4 with a lead of 156, prolonged their first innings till just before lunch on the final day.

Tasmania ended with 548 for five declared with Daniel Marsh, son of former legendary Australian wicketkeeper Rodney Marsh, making 157 and Shaun Young 62.

The total was Tasmania's third highest first-class score. Acting Indian captain Saurav Ganguly criticised Jamie Cox's late declaration, but in reality the clash was already consigned to a draw.

"We should have played in a much fairer way," Ganguly said. "They continued on for too long this morning when we (both captains) should have tried to make a game out of it."

"But we were looking at it as a practice so we are happy with whatever practice we got because for us the important games are the test matches and one-dayers."

The Indians used the remaining time for batting practice ahead of the second Test at Melbourne, with opener Venkat Laxman making 58 in a second innings score of 130 for three.

Laxman and left-hander Sadagopan Ramesh sealed their opening partnership for the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne with a first-wicket stand of 64.

Ramesh was caught behind for 27, but Vijay Bhadraraj followed his three wickets in Tasmania's first innings with a dour 15 off 106 balls.

Cox continued the farcical nature of the match on Monday afternoon when he gave all his 11 players a bowl, the skipper

making 19 changes in a 24-over period.

Cox instructed wicketkeeper Mark Atkinson to discard his gloves and take the ball for his first bowling stint in 80 first-class matches.

As if to reinforce the lacklustre affair, Atkinson delivered four overs of slow medium pace and conceded just one run.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the final day of the four-day match between India and Tasmania on Monday.

INDIA: First innings 316 (R Dravid 107, H Kanitkar 58; A Downton 5-90)

TASMANIA: First innings (overnight 472-4)

Coxe Prasad b Ganguly 139 Hills run out 134

Di Venuto c Mongia b Bhadraraj 12 Dykes lbw b Bhadraraj 61

Marsh c Dravid b Bhadraraj 157 Young not out 62

Kremerskothen not out 1 Extras: (b-1, lb-11, w-6, nb-14) 32

Total: (For five wickets dec) 548 Fall of wickets: 1-205; 2-227; 3-277; 4-381; 5-546

Bowler O M R W

Prasad 21 5 52 0 Mohanty 26 7 81 0

Ganguly 18 0 42 1 Kumaran 26 6 105 0

Harbhajan 47 5 141 0 Bhadraraj 32 2 105 3

Kanitkar 5 0 10 0 INDIA: Second innings

Laxman st Atkinson b Young 58 Ramesh c Atkinson b Kremerskothen 27

Bhadraraj lbw b Di Venuto 15 Bhadraraj not out 18

Kanitkar not out 0 Extras: (b-3, lb-3, w-3, nb-3) 12

Total: (For three wickets) 130 Fall of wickets: 1-64; 2-98; 3-124

Bowler O M R W

Miller 16 7 29 0 Downton 8 1 30 0

Wright 8 3 10 0 Marsh 9 3 22 1

Young 8 2 17 0 Dykes 2 0 6 0

Alkinson 4 3 1 0 Di Venuto 2 0 6 0

Cox 1 1 0 0 Hills 1 1 0 0

Result: Match drawn.

All is not lost for Mark

HOBART, Australia, Dec 20: Australian cricket selectors are likely to spare Mark Waugh the humiliation of

Waugh heaped on former Indian captain Mohammad Azharuddin when the team for the second Test is named on Tuesday, reports AFP.

Waugh, who is two matches away from 100 Test appearances, has received support from selectors and media alike after his poor form put him in doubt for the remaining two Tests against India.

Azharuddin, another 98-Test veteran, was dumped by the Indian selectors for the current tour, amid reports he was not wanted by the new team management of skipper Sachin Tendulkar and coach Kapil Dev.

Azharuddin's absence was clearly felt when the younger batsmen failed to cope with the

at the Gabba last month have been 5.0, 0.5, 8.

Any further player may have been summarily dumped, but Waugh has been backed to play his 99th Test at Melbourne and the 100th on his home turf at Sydney in the third match against the Indians.

Unlike Azharuddin, who learnt of his omission from news reports, Waugh has received much-publicised support from his twin brother and Australian captain Steve Waugh and selector Geoff Marsh.

"I am not a selector, but if I were, I'd pick him because he is a match-winner and a proven Test player," brother Steve said. "He got a good hundred against Pakistan in the first Test and took a match-winning catch in the second at Hobart to dismiss Inzamam-ul Haq."

"So in the last four Tests, he's played a hand in two of them," the captain said.

Steve Waugh also said the settled combination, which has seen Australia win their last five Tests, should not be disturbed.

"There's no hiding the fact you've got to score runs as a batsman, but I'd like to think we are playing very well together," he said.

Marsh, a former Test opener who quit as Australian coach in September, believes Mark Waugh has a lot of cricket left in him.

"He's having a difficult run, but Mark is still a very good

England cricket manager mugged

EAST LONDON, Dec 20 (Internet report): The touring English cricket squad was given a forcible reminder of the crime situation in South Africa when, in a rather ironic twist, one of their security officials, detective sergeant Jacob van Jaarsveld, was mugged near the team hotel in East London over the weekend.

Van Jaarsveld was crossing a field adjacent to the hotel on Saturday night when he was accosted by two knife-wielding youths and robbed of his mobile phone and wallet.

Cute handball

Sports Reporter

Arambagh Krira Sangha recorded a comprehensive victory over Prime Sporting Club in the Cute First Division handball league match at the court adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

In the first match of the day, Arambagh defeated Prime Sporting Club by 16-5 goals. The winners led the first half 5-2.

In the another match, Mariner Youngs Club and Swatirra Club played out an exciting 14-14 draw.

Rating chess

Three International Masters of Bangladesh Biman are jointly leading in the Prime Bank 2nd International Rating Chess competition bagging five points each after the sixth round matches at the NSC chess room on Sunday, reports UNB.

The leaders are, Ziaur Rahman, Reefat bin Sattar and Abdullah Al Rakib.

In the day's sixth round matches, Rakib beat Sheikh Nasir Ahmed of Bangladesh Ansars while Zia and Reefat shared points.

Three players -- FIDE Master Enamul Hossain Rajib of Titus Club, Taiyubur Rahman Sumon of Uttara CCC and Abu Sufian Shakil of Ansar followed the leaders securing four and a half-point each.

In the day's other matches, Rajib beat Firoz, Emon beat Anis, Shakil beat Mahmud, Shafiq beat Moniruzzaman, Jamil beat Parag, Mithu beat Sohail, Delu beat Tipu, Aminul beat Arman and Mustafa beat Alamgir while Reza drew with Sumon, Lavlu drew with Hasan and Ahmedul got walkover against Monir.

Vaughan gets green signal

EAST LONDON, South Africa, Dec 20 (Reuters): England batsman Michael Vaughan has been cleared for selection for the third Test against South Africa after scans on Monday revealed he is not suffering from an injured right index finger.

Vaughan went for tests on Monday to ascertain whether he had fractured the joint after being struck by a rising delivery from seamer Garnett Kruger during England's tour match against a Border-Eastern Province Combined XI at Buffalo Park on Sunday.

"The scan revealed no fracture and Michael will be available, if selected, for the Test side next Sunday," team physiotherapist Dean Conway said.

"The only irregularity that showed up was from an old injury to that same finger."

Vaughan, along with Michael Atherton, has been England's most successful batsman during their tour to South Africa and will be vital to England during the third Test in Durban.

Rivaldo's double delight

PARIS, Dec 20: Barcelona's Brazilian forward Rivaldo has been chosen as the European Player-of-the-Year, organisers France Football said today, reports Reuters.

Rivaldo, who guided Brazil to the Copa America and Barcelona to the Spanish league title, was the second Brazilian after Ronaldo in 1997 to receive the award.

Manchester United's David Beckham was second. The England midfielder was among the leading favourites after his team won the European Cup, the Premier League, the FA Cup and the World Club titles.

Rivaldo earned 219 points to Beckham's 154.

The Brazilian, who was fifth last year in the same poll, takes over from France's Zinedine Zidane, who had his 1999 season marred by a knee injury.

None of the three best-placed players of 1998 -- Zidane, Ronaldo or Croatian Davor Suker, are featured among the top 10 this year.

Until 1994, the award was open only to European players but since 1995 it has been given to the best player of any nationality playing in a European league.

Rivaldo had already been voted world player of the year by readers of World Soccer magazine.

AC Milan's Andriy Shevchenko of Ukraine was third with 64 points.



Juventus' Croatian international Igor Tudor (C) scores from a header against Fiorentina on December 19.

Premiership

Leeds return to top

LONDON, Dec 20: Leeds went back to the top of the English Premiership with a 2-0 win over Chelsea in an

ill-tempered match Sunday where Chelsea's Franck Leboeuf was sent off for appearing to stamp on Harry Kewell's chest, reports AFP.

Stephen McPhail sealed victory for the visitors with his first career goals on 66 and 87 minutes but Chelsea's French World Cup winning defender Leboeuf is likely to be in hot water following his petulant reaction to being sent off for two bookable offences.

"We're probably not going to win the league. That would be very difficult," said Vialli. "The problem is not just the gap but the teams we have to overtake."

"Hopefully we can get into Europe again and give our supporters something to cheer about. When things get complicated that's when you see if you are men or not."

Leeds go back ahead of Manchester United whose 4-2 win at West Ham Saturday had lifted them into pole position for 24 hours although the defending champions still have a game in hand.

McPhail's brace came in the second half. Good work from Harry Kewell on the right saw the Australian international striker lay the ball off to Lee Bowyer.

Leeds' neat cut-back found McPhail and the 20-year-old midfielder precisely placed his left-foot shot past Chelsea's Dutch goalkeeper Ed de Goeij for Leeds' opener.

With three minutes remaining McPhail doubled his career goals total.

His free-kick from the right-hand side was obscured from de Goeij's view by leaping Leeds defender Erik Bakke.

The ball curled past the keeper to strengthen Leeds'

Premiership title challenge.

Soon after Leeds' first goal Leboeuf was sent off for a second bookable offence but the fiery Frenchman had to be escorted from the field as he protested the decision. He then had to be restrained on the touchline.

Leboeuf had had a running battle with Kewell all afternoon and might have been sent-off when he fouled Kewell in the build-up to McPhail's first goal.

But having enjoyed a lucky escape his petulant trip on Kewell, when the striker was far away from the Chelsea goal, left referee Jeff Winter with no choice but to show Leboeuf the red card when he appeared to stamp on the Australian striker's chest.

His dismissal sparked a minor scuffle in the middle of the pitch. Chelsea's Dennis Wise was booked as a result.

"The stamping wasn't a good thing to do," said Vialli. "I will deal with the incident during the week."

Chelsea had much of the play but could not convert their possession into goals. Dennis

Wise went closest to scoring for Chelsea when his header from barely six yards out was tipped over by Leeds keeper Nigel Martyn.

Leeds 19-year-old defender Jonathon Woodgate was outstanding, putting in a series of telling challenges.

The result leaves Leeds on 41 points, two ahead of Manchester United.

A bewildered Vialli added: "I thought we were the best side on the pitch. But they scored from their first chance and then everything got more difficult. Despite losing I'm quite pleased and proud of my players."

Leeds' manager David O'Leary was understandably delighted that his side had come through a tough test with three points.

"That was a very good win. I'm proud of my players. They had to defend but you expect that against Chelsea. They are young players, still learning their trade, but they are learning well."

"We've gone top again and I don't know where we will finish. But we are enjoying the experience."

STANDINGS

English Premiership table after Sunday's match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):										
Leeds	18	13	2	3	32	19	41			
Manchester United	17	12	3	2	44	23	39			
Sunderland	18	11	4	3	33	17	37			
Arsenal	18	11	3	4	32	17	36			
Liverpool	18	10	3	5	26	14	33			
Leicester	18	9	2	7	26	24	29			
Tottenham	17	8	3	6	26	22	27			
Middlesbrough	18	8	3	7	23	25	27			
West Ham	17	7	4	6	19	18	25			
Chelsea	16	7	3	6	21	17	24			
Everton	18	6	6	6	28	28	24			
Villa	18	6	4	8	16	20	22			
Coventry	18	5	6	7	23	20	21			
Wimbledon	18	4	9	5	28	30	21			
Newcastle	18	5	4	9	28	32	19			
Southampton	17	4	5	8	20	27	17			
Bradford	17	4	4	9	15	25	16			
Derby	18	4	3	11	16	29	15			
Watford	18	3	2	13	14	36	11			
Wednesday	17	1	3	13	15	42	6			

Primera Liga

Welcome win for Barca

MADRID, Dec 20: In-form Deportivo La Coruna extended their lead in the

Primera Liga to eight points when they saw off their closest challengers and Galician neighbours Celta Vigo in a tense derby match Saturday, reports AFP.

At the other end of the table fallen giants Real Madrid at last had some festive cheer with a 2-1 home win over Espanyol - their first at their once-mighty Bernabeu Stadium freedom for three months.

Deportivo lead the table with 36 points, eight points ahead of Celta Vigo and nine points ahead of Real Zaragoza, who drew 2-2 at Athletic Bilbao late on Sunday, and 10 points in front of fourth-placed Barcelona following their 2-1 win against Atletico Madrid earlier on Sunday.

Real Madrid, meanwhile, are a massive 16 points behind De-

portivo although they did beat Espanyol 2-1 for their first home win since August 29 to move out of the relegation zone.

"Super-Depor", who have never won the Spanish title and were famously deprived on the final day in 1994 when Brazilian World Cup striker Bebeto missed what would have been a championship-winning penalty, saw off Vigo thanks to a goal from Argentinian Jose Oscar Flores, known universally as Turi Flores.

Flores fired a powerful shot past Vigo goalkeeper Richard Dutruel after good work from Brazilian playmaker Djalminha.

Vigo can consider themselves unlucky not to get a draw with Argentinian Gustavo Lopez and Russian Alexander Mostovoi both hitting the bar.

But Real will be equally pleased to have posted a much-needed victory with goals from long-serving pair Raul and Fernando Hierro to seal their first win at home since August 29 in the Primera Liga.

Meringues coach Vicente del Bosque bubbled: "It was three absolutely vital points. It was a win obtained through suffering."

Paraguayan World Cup forward Miguel Angel Benitez had put Espanyol ahead with a half-volley after trapping the ball on his chest and Real fans started to fear a rerun of their last home league match when Real

Zaragoza gave them a public 5-1 spanking.

But then Raul squared the match and just to rub it in for Espanyol their goalkeeper Luis Cavallero had to be replaced after being injured in a vain attempt to prevent the goal.

Hierro popped up with the winner after Espanyol failed to clear the ball.

The Bernabeu fans gave a warm reception to English star Steve McManaman, who missed the Zaragoza debacle through injury but gave a more frosty welcome to French striker Nicolas Anelka, who is rapidly making himself as popular with the Spanish press as he was with the British media.

Real could even afford to squander a penalty with Raul the culprit, sending the ball wide of substitute goalkeeper Jose Luis Mora's left-hand post.

At the Nou Camp stadium, Spanish international Luis Enrique opened the score for Barcelona, well served by a backheel from Brazilian Rivaldo, one of the candidates for Tuesday's European footballer of the year award.

Then Atletico's Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink equalized with his 13th goal of the season after converting a very dubious penalty decision.

Boudewijn Zenden scored the winner for the home side with a superbly-taken 30m freekick.