

Hick hammers Zimbabwe

HARARE, Feb 20: England's Zimbabwe-born batsman Graeme Hick's innings of 80 in 95 balls should have triggered a formidable score by his adopted country against his compatriots here in the third of four one-day internationals, reports AFP.

But in engineering a middle-order collapse Zimbabwe pegged the tourists back to a reachable 249 in order to win this third match.

They will have to do so in order to reduce England's series lead to 2-1 and give them a chance of squaring the series.

Hick showed no nerves after coming in when Nasser Hussain was caught at slip by Alistair Campbell for only one run in the second over of the innings and with England at 4-1 hitting 10 boundaries in his 80.

In an 81 runs partnership with Nick Knight, Hick reached his 50 in 50 balls, enabling England to set off at more than five runs an over. But he eased off after Knight went for 26 and was not so fluent.

He was run out by Murray Goodwin when he looked around at the fielder when called for a quick single instead of going directly to safe ground.

His partnership with Darren Maddy, worth 64 runs, was a second platform for England's run-chase.

Hick scored 87 not out in Bulawayo on Friday and with all-rounder Craig White he has been the success for England so far on this short tour.

Darren Maddy, who made 53, required 83 balls. When he was out England were 198-5 and looked to be set for a big total with eight overs remaining.

But after removing Maddy, left-arm spinner Dirk Viljoen, who was introduced at a late stage, went on to dismiss Mark Ealham and Chris Read in his next over. Vikram Solanki fell to Gary Brent and the tourists slipped from 198-4 to 207-7.

Zimbabwe might well have been facing a near impossible target, but their later successes give them a realistic chance on a good wicket, even though White and Andy Caddick smashed 41 runs in the last 34 balls.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the third one-day international between Zimbabwe and England at the Harare Sports Club on Sunday: ENGLAND

Table with columns: Player, Runs, Wickets. Includes names like Hussain, Knight, Hick, Maddy, Solanki, White, Ealham, Read, Caddick, Extras, Total.

Henman disposes of Kafelnikov

ROTTERDAM, Feb 20: Tim Henman won a titanic struggle in the semifinal of the World Tennis Tournament Saturday, besting top seed and world No 2 Yevgeny Kafelnikov 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 in a match which hinged on a single late line call, reports AP.

The Russian thought he had just driven a perfectly judged groundstroke past the fifth-seeded Briton to save a break point at 3-4 down in the final set. He was preparing to serve again when the umpire told him the ball had been called out.

Henman seized the chance and served out, winning the match-point with his 14th ace.

At the start, Henman left Kafelnikov standing in the blocks, breaking to love in the first game thanks to three thumped passes and a drop-shot, and storming to a 4-0 lead. Kafelnikov could not get his first serve working consistently but came back to 4-3 before Henman regained his grip on the set.

In the second set Henman surrendered a break with a double fault, then broke back chipping and charging on Kafelnikov's second serve in the eighth game, only for the resilient Russian to break back again.

The match just kept on heating up with Henman saving six break points to hold serve in the eight-deuce third game of the final set. Every point was a dogfight and both players yelled at themselves in frustration after the smallest error.

And after all that effort, the pair were due to return to the Centre Court in the Ahoj Arena on the same side of the net in the evening, as doubles partners.

Henman will play Frenchman Cedric Pioline, seeded eighth, in today's final after he beat unseeded compatriot Jerome Golmard 6-3, 6-4.

Courier crashes

MEMPHIS, Tennessee, Feb 17: Laurence Tieleman beat sixth-seeded Jim Courier 7-6, 6-0 Wednesday night in the St. Jude tennis tournament, reports AP.

Courier was among three seeded players who failed to reach the second round.

Earlier Wednesday, top-seeded Mark Philippoussis beat Brian McPhie 6-2, 6-4 in his opening match.

Philippoussis, the 1998 tournament winner, moved into Thursday night's feature match against 16th-seeded Magnus Larsson.



Fredri Bobic (L) of Borussia Dortmund battles for possession with SC Freiburg's Bul Diarra during their Bundesliga fixture at Freiburg on February 19. — AFP

World Cup bid Blatter lifts English spirit

MAIDENHEAD, England, Feb 20 (Reuters/Internet) - FIFA president Sepp Blatter praised England's bid to stage the 2006 World Cup finals on Saturday and at the same time said it was not, as some had predicted, a foregone conclusion the finals would go to Africa.

Blatter, in England for the annual meeting of FIFA's law-making International Board at the former stadium home of Clivedon, told Reuters in an interview: "I was misquoted when I said that Germany were 'nearly favourites' for the World Cup."

"I said they had a very strong bid -- and the English bid is equally strong. Everybody around the world knows that both of these countries are able to organise a World Cup," but the difference with England's bid is that all the others have to reach FIFA's standards -- England have them already.

"England already has safe, secure all-seater stadiums. There is a special feeling for the World Cup in England and I can understand the feeling and complimented the International Football Association Board for how the game is organised here.

"This is the homeland of football, I know there is a lot of sympathy around the world for football in England, the Premier League and the FA Cup -- but there is also a feeling that the World Cup should rotate around the continents.

"However, the idea of rotation is not yet anchored in FIFA's regulations -- it might be in the minds of people -- but people will have to vote not with their hearts but with reason and a rationale that makes sense.

"FIFA cannot impose the idea of rotation -- it is not defined in the World Cup will go to Africa because of rotation. progress being made to the next World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002.

"I don't think we will have any problems as far as organisation and facilities is concerned. We saw when the bid was made in Tokyo in 1998, I believe everything worked and I am sure it will be the same in South Korea.

"The only thing that worries me is that in the next two World Cups -- one in Africa -- you will have two World Cup centres, national broadcasting -- and 10 stadiums in one country.

"Still, I am sure it is very interesting because for the first time both the European and the South American countries will be 'away' and I am sure that will be some upsets."

When they came back to Asia four years ago the investors said there was nothing to choose between South Korea and Japan. Well, when they port back to me this time they want the bids to be ranked 1 to 5.

"Of course all the bids are equal at the moment and I did not look at the reports of them. I want to see them together."

While the 2006 World Cup the focus of much attention is the bidding countries, Blatter said he was pleased with the progress being made to the next World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002.

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CONCACAF Gold Cup USA, Honduras knocked out

MIAMI, Feb 20 (Reuters/Internet) - Colombia ousted the United States in penalty kicks before Peru took a 5-3 victory over Honduras in a tumultuous CONCACAF Gold Cup quarter-final Saturday that ended in chaos as fans stormed the field to protest a disallowed Honduran goal.

The Peru-Honduras game was halted in the final minute but the result was official, sending Peru to the semifinals in San Diego on Wednesday against Colombia.

Colombia beat the U.S. team in penalty kicks, 2-1, after playing to a 2-2 draw after 120 minutes of regulation and extra time before a crowd of 32,972 at the Orange Bowl.

HONDURAS PERU The second game of the quarter-finals doubleheader never got to the end of regulation. Referee Mario Sanchez of Chile stopped the game with 37 seconds remaining after several hundred fans, protesting a disallowed Honduran goal, ran onto the field and threw liquor bottles, rocks, stadium seats, seat cushions and water bottles onto the pitch.

Several fans were seen led away by police after the game, but officials could not immediately confirm how many were arrested.

Ted Howard, general coordinator for the venue, said the match would not be considered abandoned and would stand "as an official, completed match."

The disturbance began in the 89th minute, when an apparent goal by Honduran captain Carlos Pavon was disallowed due to an offside call.

An incensed Pavon kicked the ball into the stands and raised his hands up to the fans in protest. Sanchez red-carded Pavon and teammate Milton Reyes, further enraging Honduran supporters.

1994 World Cup rivals. Gonzalo Martinez and Andres Mosquera converted their attempts for the Colombians, while John Perez hit his into the crowd and goalkeeper Brad Friedel dived to his right to deny Mayer Candelo.

The Colombians refused to wilt as Bedoya fired in a 25-yard shot for the equaliser in the 81st minute.

"To give away two leads, it's painful," Eddie Lewis said. "We had the game in hand."

Peru raced to a 4-1 lead in the second game before the Hondurans clawed back to within 4-3 in the 69th minute.

Waldir Saenz gave Peru some breathing room, scoring from 12 yards in the 87th minute before things got out of hand.



An aerial melee during the CONCACAF Gold Cup quarterfinal between Honduras and Peru in Miami on February 19. — AFP photo

The third set was equally close and another tie-break was needed. Williams, showing more composure at the end of a tight battle which lasted more than 2-1/2 hours, won it 7-3.

Williams, who has fully recovered from the knee injury she sustained in her defeat by Nathalie Tauziat in last Sunday's Paris Open final, may prove too strong for Chladkova.

The unranked Czech struggled against Sidot as the pair gave their all as they strove to reach their first final in a major event.

After losing the first set, Sidot fought her way into the match by breaking her opponent in the first game of the second set.

Chladkova broke back to level the set at 4-4 and forced a tie-break, which Sidot took 7-5 with a forehand winner on set point.

Chladkova dropped serve to go 4-2 down in the decisive set and Sidot then served for the match, leading 5-3, only to have her service broken.

Black will meet Sweden's Magnus Larsson, who advanced Saturday with a 3-6, 7-6, 6-4 win over unseeded Andre Sa of Brazil.

Haas, 21, was extended to three sets in each of his three matches leading into the semifinals and his luck ran out against the 30-year-old Black.

"I just didn't have the big serves when I needed them," Haas said. "And Byron Black played a great match and didn't give me any free points."

Black, ranked 35th at the end of last year, took advantage of 36 unforced errors by Haas.

He won the first tiebreaker when Haas followed a double fault at 2-5 with an unforced backhand error. In the second tiebreaker, Haas was serving at 5-5, but self-destructed with a pair of unforced forehand er-

rors. Black said, "I'm just real happy to get through this match. It could have gone either way."

Black will be seeking the title of the ATP Tour's number one player when he meets Rainer Schuttler of Germany, Larsson, the 16th seed, dropped the opening set, won the second-set tiebreaker and wore down his opponent in the third with some of the game's smoothest groundstrokes and a steady serve.

Larsson broke Sa, 22, in the ninth game of the final set, taking advantage of a Sa double fault, an unfortunate lob that hit a court light standard and an unforced backhand error on break point.

"I think my experience helped," Larsson said. "I also had my match from (Friday) on my mind during the second set. And when I got to the tiebreaker I felt pretty comfortable and I thought about him not having been in a semifinal before."

Sa said Larsson's 11 years on tour account for something. "There's no doubt that he is a smart player," Sa said. "Every time I thought I had an opening he got there somehow."

Larsson may have retrieved most of Sa's shots, but he had to do so despite a painful bout of tennisitis in his left knee.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS 1 Sheepish remarks 5 Crony of Tarzan 8 Marco Polo territory 12 Formerly 13 Singer Davis 14 Pack away 15 Armed echinoderm 17 King's soldier? 18 Fragrant wood 19 Mot shows 21 Snapshots 24 Opposite of 25 Tease 28 Elevator 30 Diamond 31 Feedbag 33 See 24 35 Old French 36 Top of a swimsuit 37 Novice

Split decision

LAS VEGAS, Feb 20: The day Marco Barrera fought Saturday night, Erik Morales may be getting out of the super bantamweight division just in time, reports AP.

Morales escaped a bruising fight and a 12th-round knockdown to beat Barrera by a split decision and add the WBO version of the 55-kilo (122-pound) title to the WBC crown he brought into the ring.

The battle of Mexican champions went 12 furious rounds and was still in doubt until it went to the scorecards of the three ringside judges, two of whom favored the undefeated Morales.

"The people needed and wanted a great fight like this and we gave it to them," Morales said.

Both fighters were bruised, cut and swollen. Blood flowed from a cut beneath Barrera's left eye and late in the fight a cut opened up and bloodied Morales' right eye.

CRYPTOQUIP

Grid for Cryptquip puzzle with letters L, K, U, Z, A, J, M, N, F, S, U, O, U, W, S, K, I, G, L, E, Z, W, X, U, W, N, W, F, J, U, J, K, F, O, M, U, A, E, I, M, I, M, U, I, M, Z, G, U, J, X, U, L, U, W, I, G. Includes clues and solution: Yesterdays answer: YESTERDAY.