

**Nat'l league**  
**Lancs, Leics tie match**

MANCHESTER, England, May 8: Defending champions Lancashire Lightning tied with the Leicestershire Foxes in the English National League Division One on Sunday, reports Reuters.

The Foxes' last-wicket pair of Jonathan Dakin and Anil Kumble needed 11 runs of the final over for victory at Old Trafford.

But, as they closed in on their target in a thrilling finale, they could scramble only a single off the last ball to leave the scores level.

Lancashire's new overseas player Saurav Ganguly (61) and England opener Mike Atherton (46) steered the home side to 177 for seven in their 45 overs.

But the Foxes were always in the hunt thanks to a splendid innings from Ben Smith before he was run out for 90.

Australian paceman Glenn McGrath took two for 22 as the Worcestershire Royals beat the Yorkshire Phoenix by nine runs at Headingley.

Paul Pollard (55) and Reuben Springer (49) were Worcestershire's top scorers in a total of 173 for eight.

Yorkshire made 164 for nine in reply.

James Averiss took five for 20 in just 29 balls to bowl the Gloucestershire Gladiators to victory over the Northamptonshire Steelbacks in a game reduced to 35 overs a side because of rain.

In Division Two, Nick Knight continued his impressive form with the bat as the Warwickshire Bears ran out nine-wicket winners over the Glamorgan Dragons at Edgbaston.

The England left-hander made an unbeaten 68 from just 26.5 overs after the Welsh county had been dismissed for a meagre 125.

The Nottinghamshire Outlaws snatched a three-run victory over the Essex Eagles at Chelmsford in another rain-affected contest reduced to 42 overs.

England captain Nassar Hussain (55) and Ronnie Irani (42) not out ran out of support as the Eagles finished on 187 for nine in reply to the visitors' 190 for seven.

At Lord's, Shane Warne's three for 33 could not prevent the Hampshire Hawks from losing by four wickets to the Middlesex Crissaders to remain at the foot of the table.

**Agassi's Roman crusade**

ROME, May 8 (AP): It once seemed that Andre Agassi played in Europe only against his will as he exited quickly from the clay court tournaments and repeatedly returned home frustrated in his bid for the French Open title.

But having finally won the only Grand Slam played on clay last year, the American is showing another side.

The top-ranked Agassi makes his seasonal debut on the European circuit, heading the field in the Italian Open which begins play Monday.

Rome has attracted the strongest field on European clay this year, with only an injured Pete Sampras missing among the top attractions.

Agassi has been in Rome for nearly a week, taking part in practice sessions that have drawn thousands of fans as well as dozens of paparazzi looking for shots of the player with girlfriend Steffi Graf, forcing her to retreat to her hotel.

Agassi has also played in a charity event and appeared on a Sunday TV variety show, flanked by former Italian tennis champion Adriano Panatta and top model Adriana Sianikarova.

How can you ask for more than a great city, the best food in the world, women like this and the tennis?" Agassi said.

When Panatta praised Agassi for fighting back from deep in the rankings to regain the No 1 spot, Agassi said: "It's not about struggle. It's about life."

All told, his stay has contrasted sharply with tournaments in Rome a few years ago when he would fly in at the last minute, then lose early, drawing whistles and boos from the noisy Forza Italo crowd.

Agassi has compiled an uneven record on the tour this year.

After winning the Australian Open in January, his best showing has been a semifinal defeat against Gustavo Kuerten in Miami in March. In April, he pulled out of a tournament in Atlanta with a strained hamstring.

But no player has emerged as dominant on clay this season.

In his first match, Agassi drew fellow American Todd Martin.

**Sierra Leone West African champs**

BANJUL, May 8: Sierra Leone's national cricket team put the fighting in their country to the back of their minds as they defeated Ghana to become West African champions at the weekend, reports Reuters.

The Sierra Leoneans bowled out Ghana for just 63 and scored the 64 required to win in just 14 overs, in a competition hosted by Gambia.

The West African Cricket Quadrangular normally brings together teams from four former British colonies but Nigeria had to pull out this year because of financial constraints.

# Probe for finding truth

Time, place yet to be fixed for Hansie hearings

CAPE TOWN, May 8: The inquiry into match-fixing allegations involving former South African captain Hansie Cronje aims only to find the truth and not to recommend criminal prosecutions, the head of the probe said Monday, reports AFP.

This is in no sense a criminal prosecution," Edwin King, head of the government-appointed commission of inquiry into the scandal, told reporters here.

There is no prosecutor and there are no criminals -- I do not see it at present as my function to recommend any formal criminal proceedings," King said.

King said his brief was only to establish the truth around allegations of match-fixing.

The commission, appointed last week, will start hearing evidence "sooner rather than later," King said. It has to present a preliminary report to the government by June 30.

"We have a very real sense of the urgency of the matter, the great public interest, and the necessity to get this thing started as quickly as possible.

"But if we kick off without proper preparation, we will achieve the exact opposite of what we want to achieve," he said.

However, the country's Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour said here today he was still unable to announce definite venue or starting date for hearings in the match-fixing inquiry.

The hearings were originally scheduled to take place in Pretoria, but King has requested it be based in Cape Town. Balfour indicated this request was still being considered.

Speaking at a press conference following a meeting with King, Balfour said: "Whilst we realise the sense of urgency of the inquiry, every effort will be made to ensure that the inquiry starts as soon as possible. No definite date of hearings will be given at this stage."

Last week it was announced that the hearings would start on Monday.

The commission was announced after Cronje admitted on April 11 that he had taken \$8,200 dollars from an Indian bookmaker to provide "information and forecasts" during a one-day series involving South Africa, England and Zimbabwe last year. He was immediately sacked.

It will also look into the allegation that the South African team was offered 250,000 dollars to throw a match in Mumbai, India, in December 1996.

Claims by the Indian police that Cronje and teammates Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom were involved in the fixing of one-day

matches during South Africa's tour of India in February and March will also be probed.

King, who retired two weeks

ago as judge-president of the Western Cape province, said he hoped to conduct the inquiry in a "congenial" atmosphere. However, he would subpoena witnesses if necessary, he said.

Tim hoping people will come forward and open up to the commission and make this almost a cleansing and healing process -- but make no mistake: if I have to use firmer methods, I will," he said.

King said the jurisdiction of the commission was limited to South Africa, but he would seek cooperation from other countries and from the International Cricket Council.

Balfour said South Africa's foreign ministry would request "relevant documentation" from other countries, including recordings made by Indian police allegedly of telephonic conversations between Cronje and a London-based Indian bookmaker.

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