

Warne wary of improving England

LONDON, May 23 (Internet report): Shane Warne reckons Australia could be in for a tough time when they come to England for next year's Ashes series.

"England have always been capable of playing some good cricket but we have always seemed to have the edge on them," said Warne. "But England are bouncing back and they might just knock us over."

"I think England are playing some good cricket at the moment."

"They beat Zimbabwe comfortably and their bowlers did a tremendous job. I've got a feeling we'll need to be on our toes next summer." Added Warne, who is spending this summer playing county cricket with Hampshire.

Warne believes England have been gradually improving in recent years, but warned the real test awaits Nasser Hussain and Co with the visit of Jimmy Adams' West Indies side later this summer.

"In my first Ashes trip here we beat them convincingly, four years later it wasn't so easy," he said.

"I think England have become a better and better team. It's always tough to beat someone on their own patch."

"I think their series against the Windies will be a good test for them. It's going to be a fascinating tussle and that will give us all a better feel as to just how far Nasser and the boys have come."

Despite a disappointing start to the season, Warne believes Hampshire could still haul themselves into the reckoning for honours but feels they need to get into the groove quickly.

He said: "If you're always losing, which unfortunately Hampshire are doing at the moment, you can easily get into a bit of a rut."

Magura cricket

From Our Correspondent
MAGURA, May 23: Independent Cricket Club and Young Boys Club won their respective matches in the Econo Cricket League at the Magura Stadium today.

Independent Cricket Club defeated Bangabandhu Jubo Kishore Sangsad by 9 wickets while Young Boys Club beat Rising Star Club by 7 wickets in the second match.

BRIEF SCORES

BANGABANDHU JUBO KISHORE SANGSAD: 64 all out in 20.5 overs (Mamun 17, Shohanur 13; Prince 4/13, Rubel 2/5, Monsur 2/14).

INDEPENDENT CRICKET CLUB: 65 for one in 11.1 overs (Tuhin 25, Rubel 19, Milton 8; Shohanur 1/14).

Result: Independent Cricket Club won by nine wickets.

RISING STAR CRICKET CLUB: 58 all out in 17.3 overs (Kabir 24, Sabuj 11, Rezaul 9; Shajib 4/10, Masud 2/5, Bipu 2/16).

Result: Young Boys Club won by 7 wickets.

Hingis regains top spot

MIAMI, May 23: Swiss teen Martina Hingis climbed back into the world number one ranking past American Lindsay Davenport as the two continued their battle for the top spot in the latest WTA Tour rankings released here Monday, reports AFP.

Hingis skipped last week's event in Rome while Davenport dropped out with an injury to fall 37 points behind Hingis in their duel for the top spot with the next Grand Slam event, the French Open, just one week away.

American Monica Seles, who won in Italy, rose from seventh to third.

Australian Jelena Dokic, who ousted fourth-ranked American Venus Williams at Rome, jumped seven places to 30th.

Top 20 women's tennis players, according to the WTA Tour rankings:

Player	Points
1. Hingis	5,982
2. Davenport	5,945
3. Seles	2,691
4. V Williams	2,577
5. Martinez	2,573
6. Pierce	2,542
7. Tauziat	2,501
8. S Williams	2,314
9. Sanchez-Vicario	1,874
10. Coetzee	1,871
11. Testud	1,869
12. Huber	1,789
13. Halard-Decugis	1,699
14. Mauresmo	1,686
15. Kournikova	1,592
16. Capriati	1,419
17. Schett	1,405
18. Likhovtseva	1,265
19. Sugiyama	1,213
20. Van Roost	1,212

Rivaldo willing to stay

BARCELONA, May 23: Barcelona's European footballer of the year Rivaldo said on Monday if it was up to him he would stay at the Catalan club, reports AFP.

"If it depended on me, I would stay," Rivaldo told a press conference.

The talented Brazilian suffered friction with coach Louis Van Gaal but following his resignation he is free to continue his time there. President Josep Lluís Núñez also resigned.

"I'll see if I appreciate the new coach and if he wants me to stay. Everything depends on the next coach and the next president."



West Indies' Wavell Hinds, who was adjudged man-of-the-match, drives one on way to his match-saving half century in the second innings against Pakistan in the second Test at Bridgetown on May 22.

Bayern's megastar search

COLOGNE, Germany, May 23: Bayern Munich have announced they will throw their customary financial caution to the wind and use their large operating profit to sign up a big name star, reports AFP.

"We want an absolute cracker - for everyone. For the fans and for us," Bayern's vice president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said.

"We'll be looking at that once we get the team basics worked out. If not Bayern Munich then who else?"

First Bayern need to get their

Del Bosque extends stay

VERSAILLES, France, May 23: Vicente Del Bosque coach of Spanish giants Real Madrid has extended his stay at the club for another season, club President Lorenzo Sanz said Tuesday, reports AFP.

The announcement comes on the eve of Wednesday's all-Spanish Champions League final between Real Madrid and Valencia at Stade de France in Paris.

"We spoke to Vicente yesterday about extending his stay at the club. We wanted to announce it today (Tuesday) so that nobody could say that the decision was based on the match tomorrow," said Sanz.

"Del Bosque knows how to bring the team together. When he arrived, relations between players and coach were very bad. He knew how to inject the right atmosphere into the dressing room. The players respect him, and he respects them," said club technical director Jose Martinez (Pirri).

Del Bosque took over as coach of the Spanish side from Welshman John Benjamin Toshack last November.

defence stable after the mid-season departure of Lothar Matthaus to New York and Markus Babel to English premier league side Liverpool.

The 23-year-old Frenchman Willy Sagnol of Monaco is part of that solution. He arrived in Munich Monday for a physical and will sign a four year contract.

German international Christian Worns from Borussia Dortmund and Kaiserslautern's Ciriaco Sforza are the other two names Bayern are angling for.

An alternative to Worns if Dortmund don't play ball would be 25-year-old Slovenian international Alexander Knave. That would leave around 40 million marks left over to buy in a superstar, someone to get the turnstiles clicking in Bavaria's capital and get football fans talking.

"This time round we staggered over the finish line thanks to Unterhaching," Bayern manager Uli Hoeness said after Bayern won the German title on goal difference Saturday when Unterhaching inflicted a surprise 2-0 defeat on Bayer Leverkusen.

"In future I want to win the title on my own."

"I am beginning to have serious doubts about what I said six weeks ago," Hoeness added, referring to his comments that Bayern would not be rash in its spending and plunge tens of millions into one name player.

"We will probably have to spend lots more money than expected. I am going to have to come to terms with that while I am on holiday."

Hoeness is a valiant defender of tight spending and sensible budgets which, unlike many other leading European clubs, has kept Bayern financially healthy and well in the black.

He recognises however that to win the Champions League - the only title to elude Bayern in

the last few years - something extra is needed. There has been no sign yet though which international star Bayern is looking at buying.

Romario out of action

RIO DE JANEIRO, May 23: Veteran Brazilian striker, Romario, will be out of action for the next eight to 10 days because of injury, Vasco da Gama team doctor Alexandre Campello told AFP Monday.

The Brazilian legend injured his heel during Sunday's match against CR Flamengo, just before the player was due to head to Britain for international friendlies against Wales and England.

Romario, 34, who has scored 52 goals in 71 national appearances, was a World Cup winner with Brazil in 1994, and was hoping to make his comeback to the Brazilian squad in the friendly matches.

"It's difficult to give a precise diagnosis, but he won't be able to put his foot on the floor for at least four or five days, and he won't be able to start training again for another eight to 10 days," said Campello, Vasco team doctor for the past 15 years.

Campello said he had studied the x-rays of the injury with Jose Luis Runco - the Brazilian manager - and decided that Romario was not fit enough to play in Wales or England.

Romario said: "I don't remember what happened exactly, because I was in so much pain."

"I'm really disappointed because this was my chance to get back into the Brazilian side. Now I have to put my faith in God and hope that I am going to recover quickly, and that trainer (Wanderley Luxemburgo) will give me another chance."

Cossies dropped for dream

SYDNEY, May 23 (Internet report): The Aussie cossie, or traditional brief swimsuit, is being discarded more and more frequently as sportspeople down under continue to bare all in the name of promotion.

Sydney 2000 Olympics hopefuls are the latest group of athletes to demonstrate their naked ambition in print in an updated version of Black and White magazine's Olympic Dream series.

The "Sydney Dream" edition, launched Tuesday, features 29 athletes including 1 500m swimming world champion Grant Hackett, pole vaulter Tatiana Grigorieva, sprinter Tania Van Heer and triathlete Loretta Harrop.

The "Atlanta Dream" edition, launched before the 1996

summer games, created a stir but was a huge ratings success with the first print run selling out within hours and total sales exceeding 50 000.

Publisher Studio Magazines has increased the Sydney Dream print run to 100 000, confident that having the September 15-October 1 Olympics in Sydney will boost sales.

Almost half of the athletes featured participate in sports contested in the pool or on the beach, including beach volleyballers, divers, the Australian men's water polo team and synchronised swimmers.

Black and White editor Karen-Jane Eyre said about 50 athletes were approached and most had no problems about posing naked.

"Generally speaking, athletes are not shy - they're proud of their bodies," she said.

Hackett, who posed inside a

purpose-built fish tank, described the photo shoot as "one of the hardest things I've ever had to do."

"Not many things compare with training - but this was a huge challenge," said the 20-year-old Hackett. "For a start, walking around nude was really weird. I'm not someone who is 100 per cent comfortable with it."

Hackett complained of looking "like a prune" after submerging himself in cold water for 20 minutes and having to hold his breath under water for 30 seconds at a time.

Last year the national women's soccer team generated unprecedented publicity for the sport in Australia by releasing the Matildas calendar, which featured several players posing naked.

Demand for the Matildas calendar outstripped supply.



Winners of the National Tennis Circuit Leg-2 pose with their trophies at the National Tennis Complex at Ramna yesterday.

Shoaib getting only better

BRIDGETOWN, May 23 (Reuters): Pakistan's injured fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar is getting "better and better" and may be fit for the third and deciding Test against the West Indies starting in St John's, Antigua, on Thursday.

Shoaib has been suffering from a pulled side muscle and missed the first two Tests in Georgetown and Bridgetown which were both drawn.

Pakistan captain Moin Khan said: "We will see the (Antigua) wicket first and then we'll decide. If Shoaib is fit, then definitely he will play."

Pakistan coach Javed Miandad confirmed Shoaib was "getting better and better."

"He was struggling but obviously he is part of the team and we just wanted him to stay with the team in the Caribbean," said former Pakistan captain Miandad.

"He himself is really keen to play and, obviously if he is fit, I'm sure he'll play."

Miandad denied Shoaib was eager to return home. "There are so many things always coming into the papers and rumours always going on when you are touring (but) you can see he is here and with the team," the coach said.

Shoaib is to join Nottinghamshire for his debut season in English county cricket when Pakistan's tour ends on May 29.

Solid start for Surrey

LONDON, May 23 (Internet report): Openers Mark Butcher and Ian Ward gave Surrey a solid start after they won the toss and batted against Kent at Canterbury.

The two sides were meeting for the second time in less than a fortnight in the championship and Kent gave a debut to 23-year-old left-arm seamer Kristian Adams, as well as handing recalls to David Fulton and Matthew Walker.

Surrey included wicket-keeper Jonathan Bairstow in place of the resting Alec Stewart and also found a place for Carl Greenidge in their final 11.

Adams conceded boundaries in his second and third overs to both Ward and Butcher who then on-drove him for another four.

Adams' first five overs cost 17 runs while Mark Ealham opened with a five-over spell that yielded just nine runs.

Kent captain Matthew Fleming picked up another boundary with a flashing drive that eluded Walker's vain leap at cover point.

Both teams have been badly affected by a rain-ruined championship season so far. Kent have lost more than 400 overs including four full days while Surrey, in their fourth match of the summer, have lost in excess of 300 overs.

Surrey reached 47 for no wicket off 18 overs, with Butcher on 26 and Ward on 19.

SA to lift ban on women boxing

CAPE TOWN, May 23: A ban on women's boxing in South Africa will be overturned by legislation to be introduced later this year, Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour said here Tuesday, reports AFP.

The ban, effected by a 1954 law, was contrary to South Africa's post-apartheid constitution which rules against discrimination in all spheres of life, Balfour said in parliament.

"Our constitution is described as a model all over the world. If we fail to respect its provisions, we will render the supreme law of the country meaningless," he said.

Balfour reiterated that his ministry was committed to combatting lingering racism in South African sport, divided along racial lines by the apartheid government with mostly white-only teams representing the country.

"We live with racism in our sport everyday of our lives," Balfour said.

Once sport was at the "forefront of transformation and integration in this society, (but) we have fallen behind in this regard," the minister said.

He wanted the issue to be addressed by an international and a national conference planned in South Africa this year.

Balfour said he had made it clear that national sides should be chosen on merit, but that more effort should be made to include players from races.

"The national sports federations are acutely aware that the country is keeping them responsible for ensuring that our teams are competitive internationally, but at the same time that they continually strive to ensure that they reflect the demographics of South African society," he said.

Predominantly white sports such as cricket and rugby have introduced race quotas at some levels to promote the inclusion of all racial groups in sport teams.

Pele, Yeboah's no to Ghana

ACCRA, May 23: Former Ghana football captain Abedi Pele and fellow ex-international Tony Yeboah have rejected an invitation to re-join the national team, reports AFP.

The Ghana Football Association invited the two to strengthen the Black Stars in their preparation for the 2002 World Cup qualifying series which will begin in June.



Australian Patrick Rafter is about to make a backhand return against Spaniard Felix Mantilla in their World Team Cup engagement in Duesseldorf, Germany on May 22. Rafter lost the match 2-6, 4-6.

Wins for Russia, Australia

DUSSELDORF, Germany, May 23: A successful fight-back by Yevgeny Kafelnikov and a winning performance from Marat Safin just a day after he was beaten in an exhausting Hamburg final allowed Russia to defeat Chile at the World Team Cup here Monday.

Kafelnikov overcame Marcelo Rios 6-3, 7-5 and Safin beat Nicolas Pietrangeli 7-6, 6-4, before Kafelnikov and Safin defeated Hernes Gamonal and Nicolas Pietrangeli 6-3, 6-4.

Australia also won the first stage of the round robin event, edging out Spain 2-1 by winning the deciding doubles.

Australia went ahead when Albert Costa retired against Lleyton Hewitt with a bad back at 1-4 in the first set.

Felix Mantilla levelled the tie by beating Patrick Rafter 6-2, 6-4, and Hewitt then joined with Sandon Stolle to defeat Juan Carrasco and Jairo Velasco Jr. 6-2, 6-2.

In ties completed from Sunday, Germany beat Sweden 2-1 and Slovakia defeated the United States, also 2-1.

Tommy Haas and David Prinosil beat Nicklas Kulti and Mikael Tillstrom 6-2, 6-2 to clinch the tie for Germany, while Alex O'Brien and Jared Palmer made the score more respectable for the United States by overcoming Dominik Hrbaty and Jan Krosak 6-1, 7-6 after Slovakia had won both singles.

Kafelnikov saved a set point when serving against Rios at 2-5 in the second set, a backhand return from Rios letting him off the hook.

The Russian then went on to win the next five games and the match, and Safin made the tie safe with his victory over recent Orlando finalist Massu.

"It was my decision to play," said Safin. "I promised my team I would play so it was my obligation to do it. I was tired but we don't have a third player."

"I was really tight in the doubles and couldn't move. I was so tired, but I wanted to play here and of course we want to win the event."

"But I want to be fresh as well for Paris. I want to do well there but in Grand Slams anything can happen. The most important thing is to get through the first round here."

Rafter, who is stuttering badly on his comeback from shoulder surgery, cannot wait to move off the clay onto grass.

"Two and a half more weeks," he said. "When you're a bit flat with your confidence, I think this is probably the worst surface for me to get my confidence on."

Palmer made the score more respectable for the United States by overcoming Dominik Hrbaty and Jan Krosak 6-1, 7-6 after Slovakia had won both singles.

Kafelnikov saved a set point when serving against Rios at 2-5 in the second set, a backhand return from Rios letting him off the hook.

The Russian then went on to win the next five games and the match, and Safin made the tie safe with his victory over recent Orlando finalist Massu.

"It was my decision to play," said Safin. "I promised my team I would play so it was my obligation to do it. I was tired but we don't have a third player."

"I was really tight in the doubles and couldn't move. I was so tired, but I wanted to play here and of course we want to win the event."

"But I want to be fresh as well for Paris. I want to do well there but in Grand Slams anything can happen. The most important thing is to get through the first round here."

Rafter, who is stuttering badly on his comeback from shoulder surgery, cannot wait to move off the clay onto grass.

"Two and a half more weeks," he said. "When you're a bit flat with your confidence, I think this is probably the worst surface for me to get my confidence on."

The winning team from each group advance to Saturday's final and compete for the \$500,000 dollars first prize.

"It's been a pretty heavy clay court season for me so far. The conditions haven't been great, they haven't been quick, and it's showed up the lack of work that I've done."

He did not look like a man enjoying his job. When he tried to attack Mantilla he was punished with some blistering passes, and he had little control or rhythm.

He admitted after the match that he hadn't expected to play, but he was called in because Richard Fromberg was suffering from a bad back.

"I just didn't pull up too well from last week and felt a little bit groggy," Rafter admitted.

"It doesn't get much more frustrating than that. Just nothing's coming off the racket and real well at the last week."

"I hit a lot of balls last week (when he reached the doubles semifinal in Hamburg) and I thought I'd hit the ball a bit better today, but that wasn't the case."

The World Team Cup consists of two groups of four teams. The teams in each group play each other on a round-robin basis, with each tie consisting of two singles matches and a doubles.

The winning team from each group advance to Saturday's final and compete for the \$500,000 dollars first prize.

Davis Cup without Woodies?

SYDNEY, May 23: Davis Cup captain John Newcombe is looking away from the enduring doubles combination of Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge for Australia's Davis Cup semifinal

against Brazil in Brisbane in July, reports AFP.

The Woodies, who won their 57th doubles title together on the weekend, are outsiders to be picked in the semifinal because only four players can be selected and Newcombe said he preferred to use his three best

singles players -- Lleyton Hewitt, Mark Philippoussis and Patrick Rafter.

This leaves only one spot available in the doubles for either Woodforde or Woodbridge. Rafter, whose woes continued after a straight sets loss in the opening round of the World Team Cup in Germany Monday, will compete with Philippoussis for the second singles spot in the Brisbane tie, behind the red-hot Lleyton Hewitt.

Speaking in a teleconference here Tuesday, Newcombe said the form of Rafter and Philippoussis was cause for concern but he backed the duo to be "90 per cent" by the time Wimbledon begins late next month.

Newcombe said he would be in Paris next week to "charge Pat up" but said most of the two-time US Open champion's problems were in his mind.

"Psychologically he may be thinking, 'I better not practise too hard because I need to save my shoulder for the matches,' but if he keeps that up he's not going to have to worry about anything because he won't be winning any matches," Newcombe said.

Newcombe paid little attention to Rafter's loss to Felix Mantilla in the World Team Cup, saying he had the flu and wasn't expected to play, but conceded on current form the dual US Open champion would not make the Davis Cup team for the semi-final.

The form of Philippoussis was also a concern.

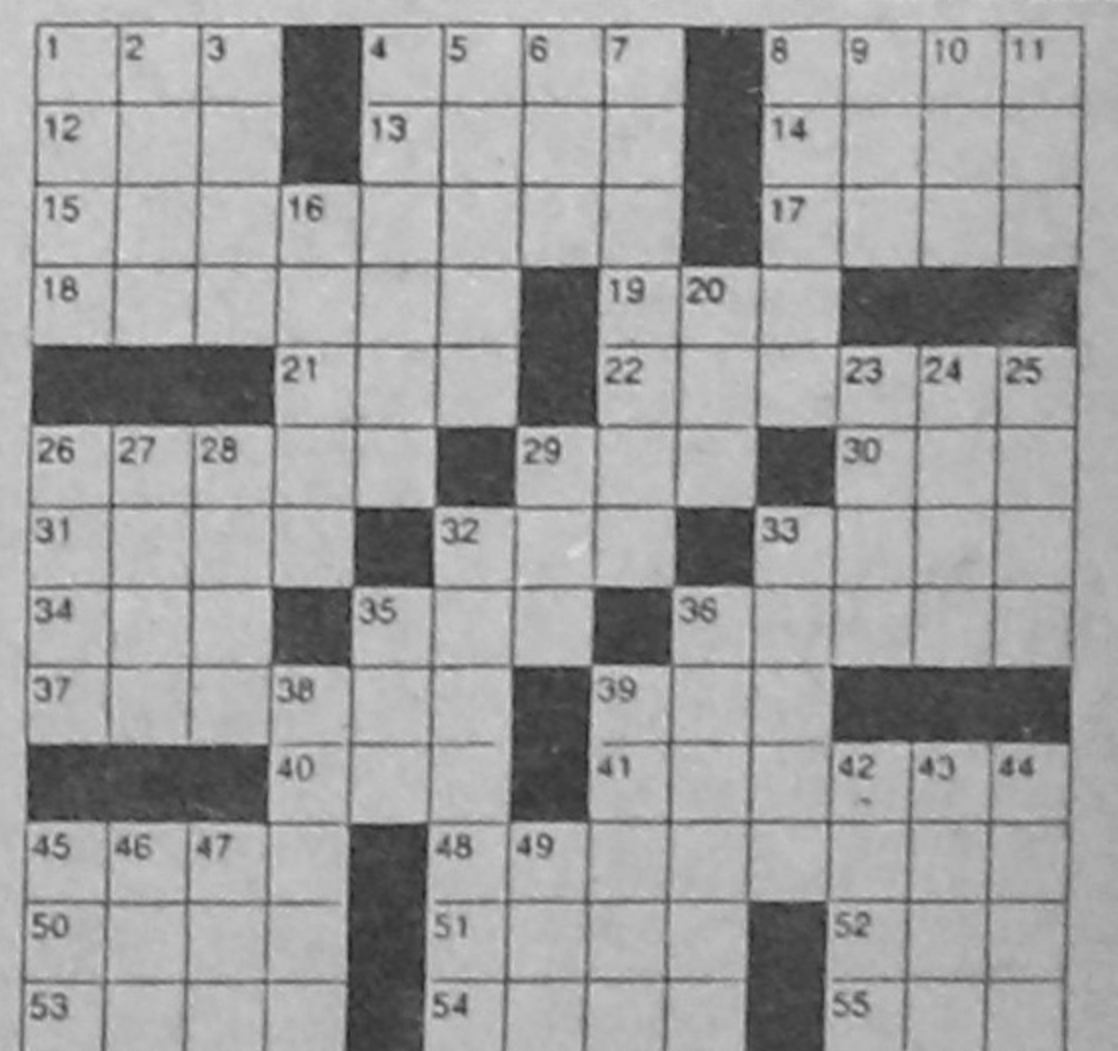
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Memorized
4 Eliz. playwright
8 Russian council
12 Past
13 One of Hamlet's options
14 Related
15 Clara Barton's group
17 Nil
18 Arousing great excitement
19 Most common English word
21 Approves
22 Had a big part in the Bible
26 Form
29 Cowboy singer
30 Downsize
31 Stats for Curtis
32 Quantitative suffix
33 Spinning sound
34 Ms. MacGraw

35 New Jersey fort
36 City in Uruguay
37 Rush the quarter-back
39 Pussycat's partner
40 Kiwi kin
41 Cheap whiskey
45 29-Across's son
48 Play-ground game
50 Help a hood
51 Hit
52 Airport info
53 Lens holders
54 Tragic Serbian city
55 Serbians

DOWN
1 Henry VIII's sixth wife
2 Scenarist James Bridges or 'n' stuff
3 Bridges or Rundgren
4 Coxswain's call
5 Disapproving ones
6 Tummy muscles
7 Small falcon
8 In a stupor
9 "Altha Ce" accompaniment
10 Troubled spacecraft
11 Can I take that as a "no"?
16 Weeds a cleaver
20 Whammy
23 Humorist Mort
24 Labrynth goal
25 Re planes
26 Practice pugilism
27 Gilligan's island
28 Saharan member
29 Monkey suit
32 Did the math
33 A laco in the crowd?
35 Mr. DeLuise
36 Veer suddenly
38 Body-shop concerns
39 Sequence
42 Tied
43 Bigfoot's kin
44 History chapters
45 Discords
46 Sapporo sash
47 Height of fashion
49 Cantab's rival

Solution time: 25 mins.



CRYPTOQUIP

D FCNULXB A RCN-RLBT Y

CFULDRCL TLDTYUW RSDR

SU SDW D ACR CX FBAA