

Saeed to go

From page 13

to be very focused while at the crease. That (injury) badly affected my consistency.

DSS: Do you think the 200-run barrier in ODIs will ever be crossed? Where did it go wrong in Madras?

SA: There are a few things in life you can never get. That day in Madras I was doing everything right. I just went for the singles and did not hit big shots. I thought that if I did it might have gone for six or topped. So I decided to go for singles and let Inzamam do the hitting. In that way I would reach 200. By not achieving the magical figure I still have the dream of getting it.

Records are made to be broken and one day my score will be broken either by myself or somebody else.

DSS: Who is the most difficult bowler you've ever faced?

SA: Well there have been plenty... I think Glenn McGrath recently in the one-dayers but not in Tests. In the shorter version he has a very good line. Obviously Courtney Walsh comes to mind in the longer type and Ambrose as well. They are all top-class bowlers. To face them one has to be in good form. I've played Glenn in good form and managed to hit him for a couple of boundaries. So if you're in good nick no bowler is impossible. However, lack of form could mean being dismissed by a medium-pace.

DSS: Name some favourite venues.

SA: I love Lord's. Adelaide is another of my favourite grounds together with the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

DSS: When you talk about Lord's, you'll be haunted by that incident of fixing the bat handle in the World Cup.

SA: I never wanted to change the bat because with it I scored two centuries in the last two games. But I had a feeling of sending it back after two overs. At the same time, I also knew that if I got out in those two I would curse myself for changing the bat. Although I didn't want to change it, I had to (do it) since the 12th man never knew how to change the grip. So, I had to do it myself. And the rest is history.

DSS: How do you combine being a computer engineer, a cricketer and a father?

SA: I graduated in 1990 and was playing for Pakistan the year earlier. But for the next three or four years I was in and out of the team. I made four or five comebacks. But since 1993 I've played non-stop cricket. So my cricket never clashed with studies. After marrying in 1996, I feel very relaxed with my wife and daughter. When I was away from my family it made me miserable. Since they will be travelling with me for most of the time, I try my best to score lots of runs.

DSS: Are you aware of a proposed Bangladesh-Pakistan Test?

SA: No, I don't. But I'd love to play in it.

DSS: What does the future hold for Saeed Anwar?

SA: Nobody knows what will happen in the future. A player can get injured or even leave the sport for good. If I'm fit enough I would like to play for Pakistan until the day I'm considered a burden.

DSS: Thank you Saeed Anwar for sparing some time.

SA: You're welcome.

England clinch

From page 13

defiance, before he became one of three late wickets for Guy Whittall.

By the time Andy Caddick was the last man out, Zimbabwe's hopes of victory had disappeared.

But there was still time for opener Grant Flower's miserable run to continue, caught at slip by Hick off Caddick for 12. The match ended with the rare sight of Mark Ramprakash bowling medium-pace.

Earlier Alec Stewart went caught behind off Johnson and England had nose-dived to 44 for four.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at the end of the second and final Test at Trent Bridge on Monday.

ENGLAND: First innings 374 (M Atherton 136, C Schofield 57, M Ramprakash 56)

ZIMBABWE: First innings 285-4 dec (M Goodwin 148 no, N Johnson 51, D Gough 3-66)

ENGLAND: Second innings

Knight b Streak	6
Ramprakash c A Flower b Nkala	4
Hussain lbw b Nkala	0
Hick c A Flower b Johnson	30
Stewart c A Flower b Johnson	15
Flintoff c G Flower b Streak	16
Atherton c G Flower b Whittall	34
Schofield c Campbell b Murphy	10
Caddick c A Flower b Whittall	12
Gough c Murphy b Whittall	3
Giedins not out	0
Extras (lb-5; lb-8; w-1; nb-3)	17
Total (All out in 75 overs)	147
Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-6, 3-12, 4-44, 5-73, 6-95, 7-110, 8-129, 9-140.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Streak	17	8	13	2
Nkala	1	5	22	2
Johnson	12	2	41	2
Mbangwa	15	8	25	0
Whittall	8	3	14	3
Murphy	12	6	19	1

ZIMBABWE: Second innings

G Flower c Hick b Caddick 12

Whittall not out 12

Goodwin not out 1

Extras 1

Total (For 1 wkt in 5 overs) 25

Did not bat: N Johnson, A Flower, S Carlisle, A Campbell, H Streak, M Nkala, B Murphy, M Mbangwa

Fall of wickets: 1-17

Bowler O M R W

Gough 2 0 15 0

Caddick 2 1 9 1

Ramprakash 1 0 1 0

Result: Match draw, and England win series 1-0.

Umpires: M Kitchen (England), D Orchard (South Africa).

Euro gala just three days away

Everybody is a contender



BRUSSELS, June 6: World Cup holders France are looking to do the double. Holland are counting on home advantage and Spain will hope to match their club form when a potentially thrilling Euro 2000 kicks off this weekend, reports AFP.

Europe's showcase tournament has all the makings of being a memorable one when Germany defend the trophy they lifted in Wembley stadium four years ago.

France, inspired by the creative genius of Zinedine Zidane, have every chance of becoming world and European champions, while Dennis Bergkamp's skilful Dutch side want to make the most of being joint hosts with Belgium.

Spain may have been the biggest flop of the 1998 World Cup but they put three teams into the recent European Champions League semi-finals

and a new generation of players have the continent at their feet.

Germany may not have looked so exciting in qualifying but always rise to the occasion. Italy have the faith in their players like Alessandro Del Piero, while England coach Kevin Keegan may have the right blend of experience and explosive talent to really make an impact.

Add to that an outsider like Yugoslavia or 1996 finalists Czech Republic and the recipe is all there for three weeks of riveting football - provided the crowds behave themselves.

The fatal stabbings of two Leeds United fans in Istanbul, the running battles in the streets of Copenhagen between Arsenal and Galatasaray supporters and the memory of the near-fatal beating handed out by German fans to a French policeman at France 98 are all too recent reminders of a scourge which still dogs the game.

And it's a scourge which started 15 years ago in the very stadium that will host Saturday's opening match here between Belgium and Sweden.

Renamed in honour of King Baudouin, the Heysel stadium witnessed the fatal charge by Liverpool supporters that led to the deaths of 39 mainly Italian fans before the European Cup final with Juventus.

Belgian and Dutch police believe they can cope with the new

threat and make Euro 2000 the footballing festival which the real fans - and a global television audience - are dearly hoping for.

When the curtain finally goes up, and that TV audience settles into its seats, Zidane will be one of those walking into the spotlight.

The gifted playmaker from the poor tenements of Marseille captured the coveted Golden Ball award after his two first-half headers ripped the heart out of Brazil in the 1998 World Cup final.

Now he is back on the world stage after a sparkling season with Juventus that very nearly brought him another Italian league title.

On paper, France look even stronger than they did two years ago. The absence of skipper Didier Deschamps has been offset by the promotion of Patrick Vieira into the best midfield in the game.

More importantly, they are unlikely to be let down as badly as they were at France 98 by their strikers - who failed to score a single goal after the group phase and who were almost comical in the final.

Now things have changed. Thierry Henry has been trans-

ferred by his move from Juventus to Arsenal. David Trezeguet is the French league's second highest scorer and there remains the brooding talent of Nicolas Anelka.

France also have world-class defenders like Parma's Lilian Thuram and Laurent Blanc, Inter Milan's most reliable man at the back last season.

But the French, who won this tournament in 1984 with Michel Platini, cannot afford to be complacent.

Holland, who lost in the

roulette of a penalty shoot-out with Brazil in the World Cup semi-finals, have the firepower up front of Bergkamp and Patrick Kluijvert, plus the telling runs down the flank by Marc Overmars.

As hosts, Holland were spared the chore of qualifying. But the club form of their men in Spain, England and Italy makes them major challengers.

Spain will also be hoping that the 'club effect' rubs off on their players.

Valencia's sparkling one-touch football was the revelation of the last Champions League but they were caught out by the sheer experience of Real Madrid in the final in Paris.

Put those two teams together, plus a large slice of Barcelona style, and it's easy to see why Spain have attracted such interest.

'Kaiser' Franz Beckenbauer claimed this week that the current German team are out of their depth.

But his compatriots have reached the last two finals and they can count on their traditional strengths of discipline in midfield and tough-tackling in defence - plus the granite face of 39-year-old Lothar Matthaeus.

Up front, they'll look to Oliver Bierhoff and Ulf Kirsten. Bierhoff won the 1996 final by coming on as a substitute to score twice against the Czechs. But he's had a mixed season with AC Milan in front of goal and was dropped by coach Alberto Zaccheroni during a recent drought.

Bierhoff's club teammate Paolo Maldini meanwhile leads the Italian bid, a week after their compatriots won the European championships at Under-21 level.

Italy's performances over the past season have been anything but inspiring and they are here without injured striker Christian Vieri, who scored five of their eight goals at France 98.

Dino Zoff must now put his faith in Del Piero, still looking for his best form after two years in the doldrums - playmaker Francesco Totti and newcomer

Stefano Fiore to make up for their lack of creativity in midfield.

If Germany and Italy are among the favourites, England have to be with the more fancied outsiders.

England haven't won a major trophy since the Swinging Sixties and have been cursed with ill-luck from the penalty spot - going out of their last three major tournaments (France 98, Euro 96 and Italia 90) in a shoot-out.

But the improving quality of their game, both technically and tactically, enabled Manchester United become 1999 European club champions and players like Euro 96 top scorer Alan Shearer, Michael Owen, David Beckham and Sol Campbell prove there is true quality in every department.

The top nations will inevitably enjoy the centre stage at Euro 2000.

But there are bound to be cameo roles for the likes of Yugoslavia, Portugal and Romania who have players at the top clubs of the Italian Serie A and Spanish Primera Liga, 1992 winners Denmark, 1996 finalists Czech Republic and World Cup surprises Norway.

And whoever makes it to the final curtain, on July 2 in Rotterdam, will be a worthy winner.

Euro 2000 boss hits back at Blatter

BRUSSELS, June 6: A shocked Alain Courtois, director of Euro 2000, responded unequivocally Monday to FIFA president Sepp Blatter's concerns over the Charleroi stadium, reports AFP.

Blatter had said he was in favour of moving the Euro 2000 first round clash between England and Germany on June 17 from Charleroi to another stadium.

"I don't know this stadium," Blatter told German daily Die Welt.

"I only know the Belgian government told UEFA (Europe's governing body) that they had reservations."

"They must think about moving the match to another stadium and I am convinced they will reconsider their decision," he added.

Courtois though was shocked by Blatter's comments. "The stadium corresponds scrupulously to the security norms demanded by the Belgian authorities and by the UEFA Stadiums Commission," he told AFP.

He added: "With backing from the highest level at UEFA the Euro-2000 Foundation confirms that the England-Germany match will take place at the Charleroi stadium June 17 and nowhere else."

The fixture is considered to carry the most risk of all the first round matches partly because of the stadium's location in the centre of Charleroi.

Blatter considered that the security measures taken by the respective police forces will be efficient but the underlying problem was hooliganism.

"We must try and block their entry. In England the various hooligan organisations are known," he said.

"However, they could still travel with their European passports. There are so many ways to travel nowadays. We cannot control everyone," the Swiss added.

Galatasaray wants Hagi to take over

BUCHAREST, June 6: Romanian playmaker Gheorghe Hagi has been asked to take over as manager of Turkish champions Galatasaray, Romanian press reports said, reports AFP.

Galatasaray, who also won the UEFA Cup by defeating Arsenal in the final, have lost manager Fatih Terim to Italian side Fiorentina and Hagi, who has been with the Turkish side since 1996, would be an obvious choice to succeed him.

The reports said that Hagi's agent Giovanni Becali was in negotiations with Galatasaray officials and that a contract could be signed early on in the Euro 2000 finals in Belgium and the Netherlands which start on Saturday.

Asked about the reports, the 35-year-old Hagi said: "Everything is possible."

Hagi will head the Romanian challenge in the Euro 2000 finals in a tough group which also includes England, Germany and Portugal.

FIFA meeting

Platini's vision tops the agenda

ZURICH, June 6: Implementation of the harmonised international calendar and matters related to the next two World Cups will dominate proceedings at Tuesday's FIFA Executive Committee meeting in Zurich, reports AFP.

The harmonised international calendar, baptised "The Michel Platini calendar" by FIFA president Sepp Blatter should be made official on Tuesday in a bid to better organise global footballs disjointed timetables.

"For me the harmonised international calendar is already a reality," stated Platini, who is Blatter's special advisor and godfather of the project.

The favourite solution going into the meeting is that UEFA's European September to May season will be adopted by the other six football confederations.

However, the calendar which will be launched after the 2004-2005 season, could also see the season shifted to a February to November schedule.

"Anything is possible," confided one Committee member.

The Executive committee is also set to declare definitive ticket prices for the 2002 World Cup after its inspection visit to co-hosts South Korea and Japan on May 13.

Committee members will also receive a report outlining selection preparations for who will host the 2006 World Cup, which will be decided after another meeting in Zurich on July 5 and 6.

Brazil, England, Germany, Morocco and South Africa are all in the running to win the right to host football's showpiece.

However, Platini told English newspaper The Independent that he hoped an African nation would get the nod.

"I know England are perfectly capable of organising a World Cup, but it's time another country was given the chance," the former French footballing legend said.

The Committee also hopes to finalise modifications to its statutes concerning television, marketing, national associations and various commissions at a meeting to be held August 4-6 and will hope to agree on these matters on Tuesday.

EURO 2000 BRIEFS



UNDATED, June 6 (Reuters/AFP): Euro 2000 briefs on Tuesday:

FIERY COOKING!

AMSTERDAM: The Spanish team's catering operation for Euro 2000 has been ruled unsafe, the Dutch news agency ANP reported yesterday.

The team's five cooks were planning to prepare food in three tents for the squad and guests at the Spanish team's base at Tegelen in eastern Netherlands but the fire brigade have ruled the roofs are too low and the risk of a fire is too great.

The cooks have therefore had to resort to using a local catering firm.

"We have given over a kitchen, a cold store and a storage room as they have an enormous amount of stock," ANP quoted the catering firm's manager as saying.

"We will be cooking until 11 in the morning. Then we'll hand over to the Spaniards until two. They'll take a siesta until five and be back at the stoves after that."

The Spanish team are due to arrive in the Netherlands this week. They play their first match against Norway on June 13 in Rotterdam.

PETIT RETURNS TO TRAINING

CASABLANCA: Influential French midfielder Emmanuel Petit was back in training here Monday the day after injuring his back in a game against Japan.

Petit complained of pain in his neck and back from the start of the Japan match and it worsened after he headed the ball near the end of the game.

The Arsenal player was examined by the French medical staff and cleared for training Monday. France will play Morocco in the final of the Hassan II football tournament on Tuesday as they finalise their preparations for the Euro 2000 finals

in Belgium and the Netherlands.

The World Champions are in Group D along with the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Denmark. Their opening match is against Denmark on June 11.

LOTHAR DOESN'T NEED A LABEL

COLOGNE: Lothar Matthaeus, who captained Germany to World Cup honours in 1990, has voluntarily stood down as his country's deputy captain days before the European championship finals in Belgium and the Netherlands.

He will be replaced by keeper Oliver Kahn, who deputised as captain on Saturday when Germany beat the Czech Republic 3-2 in Nuremberg.

Oliver Bierhoff, whose place in the side remains shaky despite his two goals against the Czechs, remains Germany's captain for the tournament.

The 39-year-old Matthaeus, who is out with a thigh muscle tear, informed coach Erich Ribbeck of his decision saying he didn't need the title.

"I don't need the arm band," he told Monday's Bild newspaper.

"I have enough authority through my experience. That way I don't have other things to think about. I don't have to chat with the referee and can focus on myself."

Germany will play their last Euro 2000 warm up game against Liechtenstein in Freiburg on Wednesday and will then meet Romania on Monday.

HAGI TO TAKE IT EASY

BUCHAREST: Romanian captain Gheorghe Hagi has a muscle strain and will have to take it easy in training for several days, the national team's doctor said on Monday.

The 35-year-old midfielder trained with his country's Euro 2000 squad for just half an hour on Monday and missed last weekend's 2-1 friendly victory against Greece because of the injury and fatigue.

"Hagi seems to have a muscle strain in his left thigh," doctor Pompiliu Popescu told reporters. "He needs several days of slight training to prevent his injury from aggravating."

Romania's first game of the European championship is against holders Germany in the Belgian city of Liege on June 12.

Coach Emerich Ienei said after Romania's final warm-up against Greece that he had decided to keep Hagi on the bench because of his "advanced stage of tiredness."

Hagi, despite being sent off in the final, was inspirational in helping Galatasaray win the UEFA Cup last month and become the first Turkish side to win a European trophy.

—AFP photo

Romania superstar Gheorghe Hagi during a practice session at the National Stadium in Bucharest on June 5.

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