

Sport

Hinds hits hundred

CARDIFF, June 7: Brian Lara's horrendous form continued as the West Indies collapsed on a turning pitch on day one of their clash with Glamorgan here on Tuesday, reports AFP. The 31-year-old Trinidadian fell for a duck in the 15th over of the day to the sixth delivery he faced, following last week's performance at Worcester, when in two innings, he scored just two runs from six balls.

The Windies limped to 176 in 75.1 overs in their innings — hardly a confidence booster with the first Test against England at Edgbaston just nine days away.

A rejuvenated Robert Croft was the main culprit — his figures of 31-9-26-5 underpinned the West Indies' misery — and on a wicket on which the tourists had elected to bat first after a rain-delayed start.

By lunch, they had lurched to 67 for five in 27 overs as Alex Wharf (3-57) and Croft did the damage.

Only 23-year-old Jamaican Wavell Hinds administered any retribution. With a mixture of exuberance and vigilance he was unbeaten on 105 as others crumbled around him.

With Mahendra Nagamootoo, he added a crucial 63 for the sixth wicket in 23 overs, before ex-Nottinghamshire seamer Wharf struck again.

Nagamootoo was trapped lbw for 22 — one of six lbw dismissals in the Windies' innings — and Nixon McLellan, Wayne Phillip, Reon King and Corey Collymore followed in quick succession.

Glamorgan opening pair Matthew Elliott and Steve James appeared comfortable from the off, but the former went in the 11th over after edging to wicketkeeper Phillip off.

The Welshman were 34 for one and only five runs later. Michael Powell (2) had gone after touching Nagamootoo to the waiting hands of Lara at first slip.

But at stumps Glamorgan, with James unbeaten on 31, were 132 runs behind the West Indies with eight first innings wickets in hand.

Cuban boxers seek ticket for Sydney

HAVANA, June 7: Seventy-three Cuban boxers, including stars of the international amateur circuit like Felix Savon and Maikro Romero, will slug it out in Havana starting this weekend in a tournament to select the 12-man Olympic team for Sydney, reports Reuters.

Giving details of the tournament yesterday, Cuban Boxing Federation President Jose Barrientos also confirmed the Caribbean island was preparing as usual for the Sydney games despite sanctions against local sports' officials.

"We continue to prepare hard, and we hope to carry out a great performance in Sydney," Barrientos told local journalists, apparently scoffing rumours Cuba's highly-rated boxers would boycott the Olympics in retaliation at a ruling by the International Amateur Boxing Association (IABA).

The IABA in May suspended three Cuban boxing officials, including Barrientos, from attending foreign tournaments for not substantiating charges of corrupt refereeing at a 1999 competition.

The IABA said the Cubans never produced evidence to back up accusations that a "corrupt mafia" was fixing results at the world amateur championships in Houston. Following the Cuban protest and walkout in Houston, however, one fight result was reversed, and some referees sanctioned.

Barrientos was banned for four years, while Cuban federation vice-president Teofilo Stevenson, a three-time former Olympic champion, got a two-year suspension, and national team trainer Alcides Sagarriga received a one-year ban.

Havana denounced those punishments as unfair, a "vulgar manipulation" of what happened in Houston.

The stars of the pre-Olympic tournament starting Sunday in Havana are Savon in the 91 kilogram category and Romero in the 48 kilogram group, both former Olympic champions.

FRENCH OPEN NOTEBOOK

PARIS, June 7 (AFP): Surprise French Open quarter-finalist Franco Squillari has modelled his game on that of one of his great compatriots: Guillermo Vilas, who won 62 titles in a sparkling career.

Squillari, who beat 15th-seeded Younes El Aynaoui in the fourth-round to earn a last eight meeting with Spaniard Albert Costa, said he studied videos of Vilas in action to help improve his own strokes.

"I followed what Vilas did." Squillari, 23, is arguably the least popular player in the tournament with line judges. He plays so deep that several of them have said they fear being hit by his racket.

NURSERY TIME

Roland Garros would like to think of itself as the mothers of all tournaments — and mothers who also happen to be top-class players certainly get a good deal.

The French Open organisers decided to create a creche back in 1994 after players' children.

The creche has four guardians and a nurse on hand to look after the youngest girls, who have a choice of games to amuse themselves while their parents aim to earn big money on court.



Skipper Jayasuriya congratulating Upul Chandana (C) on his getting the prized wicket of Younus Youhana.

— Star photo

Cronje hearing underway

A Symcox disclosure



CAPE TOWN, June 7 (Reuters/AFP):

Former South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje and some of his teammates considered taking up to 350,000 dollars to lose an international match in India in 1996, a South African player told an inquiry on Wednesday.

The judge said all hearings would be in public unless he ruled that any particular evidence or portion of evidence should be held in camera. "I don't see that happening frequently, or at all," he said.

Most of the first morning of the hearing was taken up with proceedings with a warning to witnesses that they could face prosecution if they failed to answer satisfactorily "any question lawfully put to them."

The judge said all hearings would be in public unless he ruled that any particular evidence or portion of evidence should be held in camera. "I don't see that happening frequently, or at all," he said.

Four of us discussed the money afterwards and someone said perhaps we should try and get more out of them.

"Hansie picked up the phone, spoke to someone and told us we had another 100,000 dollars," Symcox said. He added that the sweetened offer was also later rejected.

Earlier, the Commission was told that cricket presented a volatile market for betting.

Neil Andrews, a television betting pundit who was involved in a company which introduced spread betting into South Africa, was the first witness in a hearing set up after Cronje was sacked as South African captain in April after admitting that he had taken money from an Indian bookmaker.

Andrews said cricket provided punters and bookmakers with more opportunities than most sports because of the wide range of scores that are possible.

The commissions terms of reference include the period from November 1, 1999 to April 17, 2000 and the South African tour of India in 1996 when Cronje was allegedly made an offer to "throw" a one-day match against India in Mumbai.

The judge said he wanted to remove perceptions that the inquiry was planned as "any sort of revenge or witch hunt. We are here to establish the truth."

Judge King, the former judge president of Western Cape province, was appointed in May after Hansie Cronje admitted he had received money from an Indian bookmaker.

Cronje's admission followed an announcement by New Delhi police on April 7 that they had laid charges of involvement in match-fixing against Cronje and three teammates, Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje and Pieter Strydom.

Cronje said he had taken an amount of cash in US dollars, later claimed to be 8,200 dollars, to provide "information and forecasts."

He said he had been given the money in Johannesburg before the team left for India. South Africa were involved in a triangular series against England and Zimbabwe at the time. Cronje has continued to deny involvement in match-fixing and says that he did not take money to bribe other players.

According to Cronje's Christian pastor, Ray MacCaulay, Cronje claims he was "playing" with the bookmakers and "leading them on."

In a confession made to MacCaulay, which was leaked to the media last week, Cronje said he had "taken his eyes off Jesus" and allowed "Satan to dictate terms" to him.

Sports Minister Ngconde Caddell and Justice Minister Penni Maduna were also present, together with a large media contingent.

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As Shaun Pollock prepared to take a rest from the attack, Flintoff plundered six boundaries in nine balls he faced from the South African fast bowler but instead of consolidating after that, attempted another big hit and was bowled.

But despite the obvious flaws in Flintoff's temperament at

times, Fletcher will resist any attempt to drop him in the immediate future and believes the only way forward is to have consistency of selection.

"You hear people questioning whether we should be as patient with players and others say we should be more patient," said Fletcher.

That principle is also likely to apply to Flintoff's county team-mate Chris Schofield, who impressed with the bat at Trent Bridge with a determined 57 in the first innings, but was inconsistent with his leg spin and conceded 10 boundaries in finishing with nought for 73 from 18 overs.

Having fast-tracked him into the England side after just 16 championship matches for Lancashire, the selectors are not about to discard him so quickly — particularly as the recent wet weather hardly provides ideal conditions for a wrist spinner.

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you should turn him into a defensive player and destroy this ability he's got or let him carry on as he is doing.

"He's got to realise that he has a bit more patient when he plays Test cricket. His form is a concern to us but he's a talent, he is young and I think he can develop into a very, very good all-rounder."

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