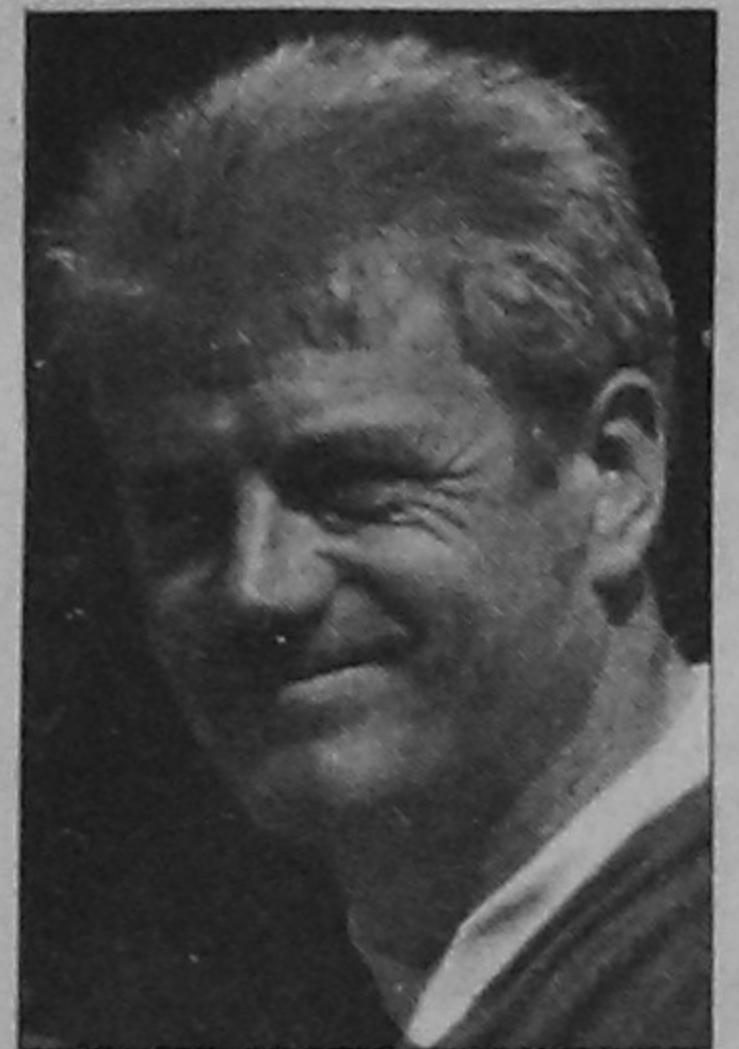


Column One SPORTS TALK



Kevin Keegan
(England soccer coach)

I've got no doubts that my squad is as strong as that available to any England manager, including Sir Alf Ramsey. After all, no-one thought the squad was that strong in 1966!

On the strength of his Euro 2000 squad.

Boost sports WHIZZ KID Competition-131

✓ Tick the Correct Answers
Post to The Daily Star
Win attractive prizes

Competition closes at 8 pm
June 16, 2000 and draw
shortly afterwards

- Who is the number one women tennis player at the moment?
Hings Pierce V Williams
- Who won the European Champions' League?
M United Real Madrid Lazio
- Who won the UEFA Cup?
Valencia Galatasaray Fiorentina
- Who lifted national schools cricket title?
St Joseph W Singh Zila Oig Khastgar
- Who is the coach of Bangladesh football team?
Harrison Van Gaal Shakti

Name
Class Roll No.
School Address
Phone: (if any)

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EN-VITS
ENERGY-RELEASING VITAMINS

NOTICE
Due to some technicalities draw of the WHIZZ KID-131 could not be held last night. It will now take place on June 16.

WI win but at a price

CARDIFF, June 9: The West Indies pulled off a remarkable 20 run win over Glamorgan here on Thursday but the good news was tempered by the revelation that in-form batsman Wavell Hinds is a doubtful starter for next week's first Test with England, reports AFP.

The 23-year-old Jamaican, who scored a sparkling century in the first innings and only recently scored his maiden Test century in the series with Pakistan, suffered a nasty bang on his left ankle as Glamorgan were dismissed for 113, with Nixon McLean taking five wickets, chasing a victory target of 134.

ATTENTION SOCCER BUFFS

As you have already noticed, Daily Star Sport has started its extensive coverage of the European Football Championship 2000. The tournament, popularly known as Euro 2000, is the world's second biggest football competition after the World Cup.

As part of our coverage, we have started publishing group-by-group detailed analysis of the teams, players, managers and other interesting aspects. Yesterday we focused on Group B as teams from this section play on the opening day today. We are highlighting Group D today as two sides of this group will be in action the day after (June 11). Accordingly we will publish Groups A and C tomorrow and June 12 respectively.

We are also suggesting you to follow the Star Sport pages for all the spills and thrills of this mega event.

ACC under-15 cricket tourney

Bangladesh-India opener

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh will take on India in their Asian Cricket Council (ACC) under-15 tournament opener at the Royal Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on July 1, according to a fixture sent by Malaysia Cricket Association yesterday.

The seven-nation inaugural meet involving Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Thailand and Malaysia, will begin on June 30.

Teams will face each other on league basis from which top two finishers will qualify for the July 9 final.

Bangladesh will meet Sri Lanka in their next match on July 2 at the STC ground. The next match against Pakistan will be held at the Kilat Club ground on July 4.

Bangladesh will face Hong Kong on the following day while Thailand in July 6. The last match against the hosts will be held on July 8.

Around 40 cricketers are now taking part in camp at the BUET ground under the supervision of coach Alok Chakravarty.

Talking to The Daily Star, Bangladesh Cricket Board

Remembrance meeting

Sports Reporter

A remembrance meeting on late Badiuzzaman will be held at the Bangladesh Sports Writers' Association (BSWA) library at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 11 am.

The Sports Editor of Daily Ittefaq, Badiuzzaman was also a life member and former president of BSWA.

Members, sportswriters and sports organisers have been requested by BSWA to be present at the meeting.

It will be followed by a meal.

member Alam Chowdhury, who is the manager of the team, said they would short-list them to 20 by June 15.

He revealed that the team, which will include 14 cricketers and two officials, is likely to fly to Kuala Lumpur on June 27.

Apart from this tournament, Bangladesh will also take part in the inaugural under-17 Asian Championship which will start in Karachi from July 15.

The camp is also at the BUET ground with former national cricketer Golam Faruque Suro supervising as coach.

SCHEDULE

Date	Match	Venue
July 1	Bangladesh v India	RSC
July 2	Bangladesh v Sri Lanka	STC
July 4	Bangladesh v Pakistan	Kilat Club
July 5	Bangladesh v Hong Kong	Club Aman
July 6	Bangladesh v Thailand	Club Aman
July 8	Bangladesh v Malaysia	Club Aman
July 9	Final	Club Aman

Chittagong defeat Pabna

Sports Reporter

Chittagong got off to a good start in the final round of the 21st Sher-e-Bangla National Football Championship with a 3-2 win over Pabna at the Maid-jee Stadium in Noakhali yesterday.

The winner led the first half 2-1.

ACE forward Farhad, Surajit Das and Yousuf scored one goal apiece for the Chittagongians while Rabiul reduced the margin twice for Pabna.

With yesterday's win, Chittagong have almost confirmed their semifinal berth from Group C having raised their tally to three points. They will need a draw from the last group match against Narsingdi who were held 4-4 with Pabna in their first match. A win for Narsingdi will also ensure their passage into the last four.

On the other hand, the defeat put Pabna out of the championship.

A total of 12 teams, split into four groups for the robin league, are taking part in the final round. Top teams from each group will qualify for the semifinals.

The day's other match between holders Dhaka University and Bhola was washed out. The Group D clash has been rescheduled this morning.

Euro 2000 on Ekushey TV

Sports Reporter

Ekushey Television (ETV) will show 14 matches of the European Championship 2000. The opening game between Belgium and Sweden will be available on DD National from 12.45 am (BST) on Sunday. Ekushey will telecast seven first round fixtures, all four quarterfinals, both semifinals and the grand final of the month-long football fiesta.

Following is the ETV schedule

June 11:	France v Denmark	(10pm)
June 12:	Germany v Romania	(10pm)
June 13:	Spain v Norway	(10pm)
June 16:	France v Czech Rep	(10pm)
June 17:	Romania v Portugal	(10pm)
June 18:	Spain v Slovenia	(10pm)
June 21:	Spain v Yugoslavia	(10pm)
June 24:	First quarterfinal	(10pm)
	Second quarterfinal	(12.45 am)
June 25:	Third quarterfinal	(10pm)
	Fourth quarterfinal	(12.45 am)
June 28:	First semifinal	(12.45 am)
June 29:	Second semifinal	(10pm)
July 2:	Final	(12 am)

Perfect Norman in his first final

PARIS, June 9: Third-seeded Swede Magnus Norman barely broke sweat on a warm Paris afternoon, playing "a perfect match" as he crushed unseeded Franco Squillari of Argentina in straight sets on Friday to seal his place in the French Open men's singles final, reports AFP.

Norman, the leader of the new ATP Champions' Race and winner of last month's Rome Masters' Series, event, downed Squillari 6-1, 6-4, 6-3 to advance to the first Grand Slam final of his career.

The ruthless efficient Swede used fluid groundstrokes and close to flawless footwork to put himself in complete command against left-hander Squillari.

He will now play either fifth-seeded Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten or 16th-seeded Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero in Sunday's final.

Kuerten, the 1997 champion, is aiming for his second title in four years, while Ferrero is bidding to reach the final in only the third Grand Slam tournament of his career.

Ferrero is one of only four men to have made the last four here when making their debut.

History in favour of the Woodies

PARIS, June 9: Australian combination Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde will be aiming to rewrite the history books when they take on third-seeded pair Paul Haarhuis and Sandon Stolle in Saturday's French Open men's doubles final, reports AFP.

The Woodies are trying to win their fifth title of the season and are bidding to capture their first career title at Roland Garros and complete a career Grand Slam.

The last team to win all four Grand Slam titles was Jacco Eltingh and Haarhuis.

Woodbridge and Woodforde are also aiming to win their 58th career title as a team, which would break the Open Era record which they currently share with Bob Hewitt and Frew McMillan and Peter Fleming and John McEnroe.

If the Woodies are triumphant it will be their 10th career Grand Slam title - more than any other team in the Open Era.

It would also be their first title in France - which would be the 12th different country in which they have won a title.



Swedish squad members Roland Nilsson (C), Magnus Hedman (2nd from L) and Jorgen Pettersson boarding the team bus on their way to the training ground from their hotel in Oisterwijk yesterday. Sweden take on co-hosts Belgium in the opening match of the Euro 2000 at Brussels today.

Second greatest show on earth kicks off today

Sweden Belgium's opening hurdle

BRUSSELS, June 9: Joint hosts Belgium may have snafled the starring role when Euro 2000 opens here on Saturday, but there may not be a happy ending to their Group B tie against Sweden, reports AFP.

Belgium have the honour of kicking-off Europe's premier soccer tournament before a packed home crowd at the King Baudouin - formerly Heysel - stadium.

Skipper Marc Wilmots, who plays in the Bundesliga for 1997 UEFA Cup winners Schalke 04, will lead out a well-organised squad which has barely a handful of top-class players but a real belief in the power of teamwork.

Friendly wins over Italy and Norway, plus a draw with co-hosts and tournament favourites Holland, have restored the Red Devils' confidence under new coach Robert Waseige after it hit an all-time low last year.

Live wire Wilmots, dubbed "Mr. 1,000 volts" in Germany, is the focal point of the side, channelling the passes forward from midfield and using his shooting ability to often lethal effect.

The defence is fronted by 35-year-old former skipper Lorenzo Staelens, while the

man to watch up front is Emile Mpenza, who will be flanked by either Derby County's Branko Strupar or Luc Nolis.

Mpenza, seen by many as the key to Belgium's hopes, was up-beat about their chances.

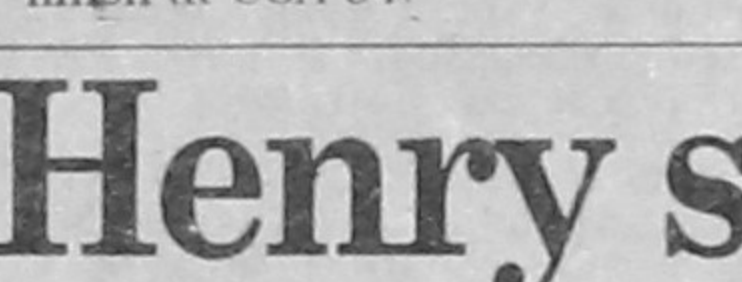
"I've no doubts about myself or this group of players," he said during training this week. "But I'm moved by the fact that the hopes of an entire country are focussed on me. Who would have thought it of a player who's only 21-years-old?"

Gentle giant Kennet Andersson, at 1.93m, remains a formidable weapon in Sweden's long-ball game, while Yksel Osmanovski, who like Andersson plays his club football in the Italian Serie A, has meanwhile finished a promising season.

Arsenal's attacking midfielder Fredrik Ljungberg is a near-certain starter.

Ironically, though it will be the opening match of the tournament, Saturday's clash has all the makings of being a decider for the two teams involved.

With Italy favourites to top the group and Turkey expected to fall by the wayside, it could be between Belgium and Sweden to see who joins Dino Zoff's men in the quarter-finals.



However, the revival in Belgium's international fortunes since Waseige took over will be hard to sustain against the Swedes.

Sweden have a lot to make up for after failing to qualify for either the 1998 World Cup or Euro 96 - this being their first appearance at a major event since their inspired third-place finish at USA 94.

Pieter, Henry say alike

CAPE TOWN, June 9: South African cricketer Pieter Strydom revealed Friday that he had been offered money by Hansie Cronje before the first Test against India in Mumbai in February, reports AFP.

Strydom's claim to the King Commission Friday came as a new shock revelation in an inquiry which has previously centred on one-day international games in India.

Earlier, fast bowler Henry Williams became the second player to confess that he had agreed to an offer by Cronje, who was sacked as South African captain, in April after admitting he had taken money from an Indian bookmaker.

Williams corroborated evidence by Herschelle Gibbs Thursday that the two players had each accepted offers of 15,000 dollars to under-perform in South Africa's final one-day international against India in Nagpur on April 19.

Neither received any money because Cronje's alleged promises to an Indian bookmaker were not fulfilled.

Strydom is one of four players charged with match-fixing by Indian police, along with Cronje, Gibbs and Nicky Boje.

Strydom denied he had been approached or agreed to be involved in any manipulation of matches during the one-day series in India.

Boje also testified and denied any approaches or involvement in match-fixing.

But Strydom said Cronje had called him to his room before the Test in Mumbai. It was only the second Test Strydom had been picked for.

"Hansie said I could make 70,000 rand if South Africa got less than 250 in the first innings (of the Test). I said no - but that if I had played 80 or 90 Tests I might consider it."

Strydom said he knew Cronje to be "a bit of a practical joker".

He said: "As I left the room I thought maybe I had passed some sort of test."

Later Cronje nudged him after a practice and said "how about 140,000 rand?"

After the match Strydom had joked with Cronje that if they had accepted the offer they could have made a lot of money. South Africa made only 176 in the first innings but went on to

win the match.

Under cross examination, Strydom said he had made the remark "softly" because he did not want anyone else to hear.

"Was that because you knew it was dishonest?" asked Jeremy Gantlett, an advocate for the United Cricket Board.

"Yes," said Strydom.

"Had any other players been approached?" the lawyer demanded.

"Later I heard Mark Boucher and Jacques Kallis had been approached but I didn't know that until later," said Strydom.

Strydom also revealed that Cronje had asked him during Strydom's debut Test against England at Centurion in January what the odds would be on South Africa winning.

At that stage it seemed the game would end in a draw because three days had been lost because of rain.

Strydom said he undertook to phone a gambler friend, "Hansie" said if he could get odds I should place 50 rand on South Africa. I phoned my friend and said if he could get odds he should place 50 rand for me."

The bookmaker had come back to him and said no odds were available. No bets were placed.

Earlier Williams became the second player after Gibbs to confess to accepting an offer of money from Cronje.

He confirmed Gibbs' story the previous day. He said he had emerged from the bathroom of the hotel room that he shared with Gibbs to find Cronje, "with a big smile on his face," talking to Gibbs.

He was offered 15,000 dollars if he conceded more than 50 runs.

"I had great respect for Mr Cronje. I thought if he can do something like this why can't I?"

Williams admitted: "It was not right. I was stupid. I should have known better."

Williams said Cronje had said that South Africa were not supposed to score more than 270 when the team batted.

After Gibbs had scored 74 and South Africa made 320, Cronje went to Williams during the break between innings and told him the deal was off. He received no money.

Boje was the third witness of the day and denied having been approached at any stage by Cronje or being involved in any attempts to manipulate matches.

He said he was "quite shocked" and could not explain how his name was linked to the allegations. "The only person who can say anything about it is Hansie himself."

Boje said he had great respect for Cronje who had been his captain at school, provincial and national level. "He's a close friend. I'm a Christian and I forgive him for what he's done and for mentioning my name."

Boje was asked why he had not asked Cronje why his name was mentioned.

"I did ask him what was going on. I didn't ask him why his name was mentioned."

Mary, Conchita face off



PARIS, June 9 (AFP): Whatever the outcome of Saturday's women's singles final at the French Open a new name will be carved on the old trophy after French sixth seed Mary Pierce takes on fifth-seeded Spaniard Conchita Martinez.

Both players have fought like lionsesses to make it this far and Pierce expended so much effort she ended up on an intravenous drip after spending more than two hours putting out top seed Martina Hings in Thursday's semi, finally advancing 6-4, 5-7, 6-2.

Earlier, Martinez had had rather an easier ride in ousting long-time rival Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario 6-1, 6-2 to make her first final here.

Pierce showed tremendous resolve in ousting the world number one Swiss teen after squandering a match point in the second set as she regathered her wits to reach her second final at Roland Garros.

She now has to make sure that nerves do not get the better of her because the hopes of a nation could weigh very heavily upon the shoulders of the 25-year-old Canadian-born blonde.

The host nation has been waiting for a female champion here for 33 years, since Francoise Durr triumphed over Lesley Turner of Australia in the 1967 final.

Pierce hoped to end the drought when she made the final six years ago -- but she bowed to Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in straight sets.

On Saturday, she intends to put another Spaniard firmly in her place -- unless 28-year-old Martinez, finally through to a final here after three consecutive losing semis from 1994, can make her choke again.

"It's exciting to be in the final again and I'm really happy. Conchita is playing really well lately and it's gonna be a tough match. Every Grand Slam is special but this one is different," said Pierce.

Facing Hings appeared to

India won't play in S'pore meet

NEW DELHI, June 9: India's cricket team has withdrawn from a one-day cricket series in Singapore in August amid the ongoing investigation into the match-fixing scandal, reports AFP.

Pakistan will replace India in the Singapore Challenge from August 20-27 that also features South Africa and New Zealand, Indian cricket board secretary Jayawant Lele said on Friday.

India's decision not to play in Singapore is in line with the board's recent decision to restrict its one-day commitments till the inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was completed.

National coach Kapil Dev, a key figure in the ongoing probe, wanted India not to play international matches till the investigations were over.

The cricket board, however, overruled his suggestion and sent the team to the recent Asia Cup in Bangladesh where it failed to qualify for the final.

Lele said India will play in the annual Sahara Cup one-day series against Pakistan in Toronto in September, pending clearance from the government.

The CBI inquiry will dominate the off-season with senior cricketers like Kapil Dev, Mohammad Azharuddin and Ajay Jadeja expected to testify.

There will, however, be no respite for the cricketers once the new season starts.

have put the Frenchwoman off her food as she only took breakfast and no lunch before their clash, leaving her mineral levels dangerously low afterwards and necessitating a visit to the doctor following severe cramp.

Thursday was, not the first time Pierce had been ill after a match as the Montreal-born star had similar problems at the Australian Open in January.

Pierce, who puts her success here down to her rediscovery of God and Catholicism, has had an up-and-down career, though her religion and her closeness to her brother and coach David have settled her down recently.

When she first reached the final here aged just 19 she was still beset by family problems owing to a well-publicised and awkward relationship with her father.

Her religious convictions have been cemented by her relationship with Roberto Alomar, a Major League Baseball star with the Cleveland Indians.

"I was always a believer but in the last couple of years I've become closer to God," explains Pierce, who wears rosary beads on court - while Martinez prefers a Cross of Caravaca pendant.

Controversy used to follow Pierce around and last year she caused a stir when she admitted to taking the dietary supplement and muscle-building substance creatine, which, while not on the Olympic banned list, is prohibited in France.

Pierce, who remarked the product was freely available in US supermarkets, expressed surprise at the controversy that affair generated. At Wimbledon

she was fined for taking the substance.

"I dreamt I won Roland Garros. But I can't remember who my rival was in the final," she smiled.

Martinez says working on her mental preparation had made her a new player.

"Sometimes it's very difficult when you play 13 years on the circuit to have the same level of desire. Right now I'm just having fun."

"I'm playing great tennis and I'm really focused. Even if I lose the final I'll have still had a great tournament."

Having ended a seven-match losing streak against Sanchez-Vicario, Martinez must now upset the form book again as she has a dismal record against Pierce, who has won eight out of their last 10 meetings.

Martinez will play either fifth-seeded Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten or 16th-seeded Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero in Sunday's final.

Kuerten, the 1997 champion, is aiming for his second title in four years, while Ferrero is bidding to reach the final in only the third Grand Slam tournament of his career.

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