

Cullinan called up

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 14: Experienced batsman Darrell Cullinan was recalled to the South African one-day team Saturday following their defeat by India in the International Cricket Council Knockout Trophy semifinal in Nairobi, Kenya, on Friday, reports AFP.

Selection convenor Rushdi Magiet acknowledged there was a problem with the South African top order and said he hoped Cullinan, 33, would bring about an improvement in a six-match home series against New Zealand which starts in Potchefstroom Friday.

The squad for the first three matches was announced on Saturday, with the second game in Benoni on October 22 and the third at Centurion on October 25.

Cullinan replaces Neil McKenzie in the only change from the 14-man squad that went to Kenya.

Uncapped off-spinner Shaheek Abrahams, 32, keeps his place and Magiet said he was likely to play in at least one of the first three matches.

"We are looking ahead to the 2003 World Cup and I am in favour of a rotation system to ensure we have a pool of players who have had exposure to international cricket," he said.

SQUAD

Shaun Pollock (captain), Mark Boucher (vice-captain), Shaheek Abrahams, Nicky Boje, Darrell Cullinan, Boeta Dippenaar, Allan Donald, Andrew Hall, Jacques Kallis, Gary Kirsten, Lance Klusener, Mahaya Ntini, Jonty Rhodes, Roger Telemachus.

Manager, Goolam Rajah; Coach, Graham Ford.

Queensland in control

PERTH, Australia, Oct 14: Queensland's pace bowlers followed up stylish centuries by opener Jimmy Maher and skipper Stuart Law to leave the champion State side in a strong position at the end of the second day of the Sheffield Shield clash against Western Australia here Saturday, reports AFP.

Former Test speedsters Andy Bichel (11-40) and Adam Dale (11-18), supported by relative newcomer Ashley Noffke (2-34) combined against the powerful Western Australian line-up.

They kept them to 119-5 after Queensland made 442 in their first innings after being sent in at the WACA Ground.

Only Test opening aspirant Michael Hussey (37 not out), Test wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist (31 not out) and Test middle-order batsman Damien Martyn (29) made any headway against the spirited Queensland speed battery as Western Australia lumped to stumps, needing another 174 runs to avoid the possibility of following on.

Early in the day, Maher boosted his overnight 132 to 175, while Law moved from an unbeaten 86 to 128.

The third-wicket stand between the pair yielded 275 runs.

Maher, who had been dropped at 39, occupied the crease for seven-and-a-half hours, slamming 26 boundaries.

Former Test fast bowler Matt Nicholson snapped up four wickets near the end of the innings to finish with 4-119.

BRIEF SCORES

Summary from Australian Sheffield Shield cricket Saturday.

At Perth: Queensland 442 (Jimmy Maher 175, Stuart Law 128, Matthew Hayden 47, Matt Nicholson 4-119, Simon Katich 3-46, Jo Angel 2-83) v Western Australia 119-5 (Michael Hussey 37 not out, Adam Gilchrist 31 not out, Damien Martyn 29) on the second day of match at WACA Ground.

Chuckling rules to be amended

NAIROBI, Oct 14 (Internet report): The International Cricket Council meets on Monday and Tuesday to talk about several important issues, including the way it handles the issue of chucking.

The current situation is that a bowler with a suspect action is analysed by a comprehensive panel. If the verdict is that the action is illegal, the player's national controlling body is required to deal with the situation.

To take a case in point, Brett Lee's action was deemed faulty, and the Australia Cricket Board was required to take appropriate steps.

Dennis Lillee's assistance was called in, and the verdict from the ACB's side was that his action was legal. Lee did not miss a game.

David Richards, the ICC's chief executive, was clearly not happy with current procedures when he said in Nairobi: "We made a mess of it earlier this year. We need a more honest approach to it all. The new process will not leave it in the hands of the home board. It will come back to the panel as the actual arbiter."

The panel referred to is a group of experts, one from each Test-playing country, which evaluates actions of suspect bowlers, generally using video conference techniques.

Had this approach been taken in the past, the events surrounding Shoaib Akhtar and Brett Lee's bowling actions would have been handled very differently.

ICC's \$4m clean-up plan



LONDON, Oct 14 (Internet report): The International Cricket Council (ICC) is planning to spend 4 million dollars (2.7 million pounds) during the next three years to clean up the sport following widespread match-fixing allegations.

Their announcement came just 24 hours after the United Cricket Board of South Africa banned their former captain Hansie Cronje for life after he admitted receiving money from bookmakers.

The ICC president Malcolm Gray, speaking in Nairobi, said the figure showed just how seriously they consider the matter.

The former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Paul Condon, who was put in charge of the ICC's 'anti-corruption unit' earlier this year will meet executive board members at their two-day meeting in Nairobi, which starts on Monday.

"Cricket has taken a real

knock because of the corruption issue and we have to win back the trust and support of the sporting public," said Gray. "We are making progress even if it is slow progress. It is not going to be easy. Up until a few weeks ago I was getting despondent that we weren't getting anywhere, but things have been happening all around the world in the last few weeks and I am feeling a lot more optimistic."

"Although there have been rumours and allegations for years about match-fixing, I don't think anybody realised the depth and the breadth of the corruption issue until the start of the year. I believe since it has come out into the open we have acted as fast as we can," he stated.

On other matters, he described the ICC's Knockout Trophy as a great success, although he conceded that the crowds may not have been as big as they had been expecting. The two-week event, which reaches its climax on Sunday, has featured all 10 Test playing

countries along with the hosts, Kenya.

"We came here with a two-fold purpose," Gray explained. "Firstly, to give the game a boost in this part of the world and secondly to raise funds for our development programme."

"I think in developing cricket, we are developing nations, developing kids and giving people a lot of enjoyment."

He also disclosed that Kenyan officials are keen to start the process towards Test status.

"Even it takes 4 or 5 years, let's start the process and see what happens."

Despite the corruption issues, the biggest blight to face cricket for years, Gray remains optimistic about the game's future.

"We must not forget that cricket is not just about elitist sportsmen flying around the world for the love of it. It's about Saturday afternoon, the smell of grass and friendship after the match. That's what is important about cricket and it will continue," he added.

'Pay revolt' in England



LONDON, Oct 14 (Internet report): Players are fuming that their pay is set to be frozen or even cut because of cash flow problems within the 18 counties who make up the English game.

And they are blaming the game's administrators, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

A private and confidential letter signed by the Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA) leading union officials Mike Gatting and David Graveney — and detailing the no confidence vote — was sent to Lord's this week on behalf of every cricketer, including England stars.

Players are angry that money from television deals does not seem to be coming their way.

When the ECB negotiated the current Test television package with Channel 4 and Sky, worth more than 100 million pounds, it was supposed to herald a new era of financial security for cricket.

But instead the ECB will soon announce losses of around 3 million pounds this

summer, mainly due to the number of Test matches that finished within two or three days.

This means that the 18 first class counties could each receive 50,000 pounds less from central hand-outs, which in turn means possible pay freezes and cuts for players.

According to the paper, one high profile player said: "The

feeling was unanimous among the players. Something has to be done about it."

Cricketers' wages are much lower than their football, golf and tennis counterparts.

A young uncapped player, receives around 12,000 pounds a year, while England captain Nasser Hussain gets paid about 120,000 pounds a year.

ECB chairman Lord MacLaurin confirmed a letter had been received.

In a statement he said: "I firmly reject the criticism of the ECB."

"I wrote to the PCA on the 9th of October suggesting that we meet at the earliest opportunity to discuss their concerns."

Lord MacLaurin added it was well known that the ECB's finances were under "considerable strain" and confirmed a 3 million pounds shortfall in international cricket sales.

But he denied counties would be getting 50,000 pounds less.

He added: "No final decision has yet been taken on the matter."

Emergency talks are set to take place this weekend.

LORD MacLAURIN

Maurice & the gang say sorry



LOS ANGELES, Oct 14: Maurice Greene and his United States 4x100m relay teammates apologised here Friday for their antics after winning Sydney Olympic gold, coveting that prompted thousands of angry complaints, reports AFP.

Greene, Jon Drummond, Brian Lewis and Bernard Williams captured the Olympic crown, thus amused the Stadium Australia crowd but upset Americans with a lengthy victory lap and playful moves on the medal podium.

"It has really made me feel bad about the whole situation," Greene said. "We were on the US Olympic team, representing the USA with what we did after our celebration. People were

offended and we are truly sorry."

While some posed for pictures and flexed their muscles to entertain the crowd and release their own joy at winning, others tied the US flag around their heads, prompting most complaints to Greene in electronic mail messages.

"A lot of war veterans were telling me how disgraced they feel from what we did on the track," Greene said. "I can see how people will be offended by it. I can understand it. But when we are out there, we're not thinking about what we're doing because it feels so great."

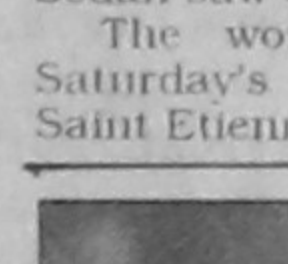
"We had so much pressure on us. After we finally finished, we were so overwhelmed at overcoming all the things we overcame, we lost our minds basically. We weren't thinking about what we were doing, just acting on it and feeling great."

"You represent every single one of those people. You cannot disgrace all those other people. It makes everyone look bad, not just yourself. You cannot let your whole country look bad. That's selfish."

Lewis, who tied the flag around his head, said the controversy has dimmed the joy of the triumph.

"I didn't mean to go out and disrespect the country," Lewis said. "I was basically just going out there enjoying myself and having fun. It hurt me inside. It kind of messed up the joy of winning the gold medal for me. I know I'm very deeply sorry."

"Maybe we were a little over the edge. I know we were very sorry for it. There are things we did that can make people mad."



Some of the players had complained the pitch was of poor quality last Tuesday as Sedan saw off Rennes 2-1.

The work will start after Saturday's home game against Saint Etienne.



Sedan, France, Oct 14: French top flight outfit Sedan proudly 'baptised' their new Louis-Duganguez stadium with a midweek win over Rennes — but the grass might just have been greener at the old ground they left behind, reports AFP.

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Drummond, who received 125 to 200 e-mail complaints a day for 10 days after the Games, found hateful racial insults mixed in the complaints.

The large majority of them were bad," he said. "I was disappointed it was that severe, that people would be that crude. There were racial overtones."

"US are very known for big bashes and celebrations. Everything involves that mentality. When you watch celebrations on television, it's part of our culture. For us to be slammed against the wall, I don't know if it is or not."

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Indian duo in final

TOKYO, Oct 14: India's Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi secured a final berth for the first time this season by reaching the men's doubles final at the Japan Open tennis tournament on Saturday, reports AFP.

Paes and Bhupathi, the 1999 French Open and Wimbledon champions who have been struggling this season, volleyed back everything they received from the Chilean-Brazilian pair Nicolas Massu and Andre Sa for a 6-3, 4-6, 6-2 victory.

"I'm happy about that (reaching the final). I hope this is not the last one," said Paes. If they win on Sunday it will be India's first title at the Japan Open since Ramesh Krishnan won the men's singles in 1986.

JULIE, CORINA TAKE WOMEN'S DOUBLES

Meanwhile, top-seeded French-American pair Julie Halard-Decugis and Corina Morariu clinched the Japan Open women's doubles title today.

The pair breezed past the Slovenian duo of Tina Krizan and Katarina Srebotnik 6-1, 6-2 to pocket the winners' check of 8,000 dollars.

It was a ninth doubles title for Halard-Decugis this season, following her victory on the same court at the Princess Cup a week ago and 14th overall, while it was a fourth of the season and 11th for Morariu.

Halard-Decugis, making her first appearance in the Japan Open this week, was to play the women's singles final against defending champion Amy Frazier of the United States Sunday.

Blewett on his mettle

MELBOURNE, Oct 14 (Internet report): Media reports suggesting the demise of South Australian batsman Greg Blewett have left the 28-year-old bewildered, but determined to prove his detractors wrong.

Blewett said recent media reports speculating that his international career was over were way off the mark.

"People have said that's the end of my career," Blewett told AAP.

"I'm only 28, so I think I've still got a few more good years in me."

"I'm probably given me a bit more incentive to prove them wrong."

Blewett was axed from the Australian team in New Zealand earlier this year and with a hectic international summer schedule on the horizon, he's determined to make every post a winner.

Blewett's first opportunity to impress beyond state level beckons on November 7, when he suits-up for the Australian Cricket Board Chairman's XI against the touring West Indies at Perth's Lilac Hill.

Blewett claimed he was merely looking at his selection in the team as just "another opportunity to score runs early," it could well be his first significant step towards a recall to national duty.

Al-Ahly keep on track

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 14: Al-Ahly kept alive their slim hope of a place in the African Champions League final with a 3-1 victory over Jeanne d'Arc of Senegal in Cairo Friday, reports AFP.

The Egyptians, twice winners of the leading continental club competition in the 1980s, have seven points, two less than Hearts of Oak from Ghana who host Lobi Stars of Nigeria Sunday.

Needing a victory to retain any chance of overtaking Hearts, the Cairo club attacked from the kickoff at the International Stadium and were ahead within three minutes through Hossam Ghall.

Jeanne d'Arc, the major disappointment of the two-pool mini-league series after eliminating defending champions Raja Casablanca of Morocco in the third qualifying round, levelled through Mamadou Diallo soon after.

Veteran midfielder Alaa Ibrahim scored his fifth Champions League goal of the year seven minutes into the second half and Ibrahim Said converted a late penalty kick to assure success for Al-Ahly.

Former German Bundesliga coach Hans-Jürgen Dörner has been chosen to follow compatriot Reiner Zobel into the Al-Ahly hot seat, but his arrival is unlikely to prevent Hearts reaching their first final in 21 years.

Home victories over Lobi and Jeanne d'Arc, who visit Al-Ahly on November 12, will give the Phobians an unassailable lead and an opportunity to atone for being runners-up twice.

It was a day of celebration for Egyptian football as CAF Cup flagbearers Ismailia overwhelmed Ivory Coast visitors Stade Abidjan 5-0 in the first leg of a semi-final.

Ismailia, chasing their first African title since being crowned champions in 1969, have scored 22 goals in four home matches and are hot favourites to win a competition for national league runners-up.

Malian Mamadou Keita triggered the goal rush after 25 minutes and Hamam Ibrahim added a second before half-time. Saad Bagli and leading scorers John Otaka and Mohamed Barakat hit the target in the closing stages.



Russian Anna Kournikova follows through on a return against Jennifer Capriati of the United States during their Swisscom Challenge engagement in Zurich on October 13. —AFP photo

Schett, Davenport thru'



ZURICH, Switzerland, Oct 14: Unseeded Barbara Schett of Austria upset Nathalie Tauziat of France in the quarterfinals of the Swisscom Challenge on Friday while second seed Lindsay Davenport overcame stubborn compatriot Chanda Rubin 6-2, 6-4 to reach the last four, reports AFP.

Another American, Jennifer Capriati, meanwhile overcame Russia's still title-less Anna Kournikova to set up a meeting with top seed Martina Hingis.

Schett ousted third-seeded Tauziat 3-6, 6-3, 6-3, but the Frenchwoman became incensed at an over-rule that gave Schett a break for 4-3 in the third set, arguing with the umpire and slamming her racket to the ground.

Rather than have pity on her opponent, Schett knew it was time to go for the kill.

"When I broke her at 3-3 in the third set it was a really tough call and she really got very upset. But I took advantage," she said, sitting at the changeover, "thinking I really had to take her now, and I did."

Davenport made heavy work of defeating Rubin, falling behind 2-0 in the first set and 3-0 in the second before earning her semi-final berth against Schett.

"It was tougher than the score," Davenport admitted. "In