

Daddy Cairns wants son to come home

CHRISTCHURCH, Oct 17 (Internet report): Former New Zealand Test legend Lance Cairns wants his son Chris to come home to Christchurch to recuperate before the summer schedule starts in earnest.

Cairns Jr is set to have a his damaged patella tendon scanned in South Africa in preparation for the Black Caps' three-Test, six-ODI series there.

But his father is not sure his match-winning son is doing the right thing.

"He really is struggling with that knee and is not right," Lance Cairns told The Christchurch Press. "I don't know how much good it would do carrying him around South Africa in the hope that he might be okay."

"Although he dearly wants to play in South Africa and the big grounds there, I think he would be better off coming home, resting up and being fit for the games in New Zealand after Christmas."

"It's probably more important that he plays here, rather than maybe breaking down in South Africa and then missing the whole season here."

The New Zealand selectors and coach David Trist are keen for Cairns to remain on tour, even just as a batsman, a sentiment strengthened by Cairns' superb unbeaten hundred in the ICC trophy, taking New Zealand to its first major limited overs series win.

Goodwin's WA return Friday?

PERTH, Australia, Oct 17: Former Zimbabwe Test batsman Murray Goodwin appears set to make his return this week for Western Australia, where he began his first-class career, reports AFP.

Goodwin, 27, was chosen Tuesday in a 12-man state squad for Friday's one-day clash with South Australia at the WACA Ground here.

Goodwin, 12th man in the Western Australian side in their draw, Sheffield Shield clash with Queensland last weekend, is expected to replace rested opener Ryan Campbell.

Goodwin's last appearance for the state side was in their 1996-97 winning final of the one-day contest.

Western Australian captain Tom Moody said Tuesday he believed the little right hander's experience would be a huge asset.

Marsh didn't want the job

PERTH, Oct 17: Former Australian cricket coach Geoff Marsh, who had reportedly been offered 700,000 Australian dollars (\$37,500 US) to coach the Indian side, said here Tuesday he had withdrawn his interest in the job 10 days ago, reports AFP.

Former New Zealand captain John Wright has been appointed to the Indian job, according to an Indian newspaper report Monday.

A report in the Deccan Chronicle said Wright would take up a two-year appointment from November 1.

Until then Marsh had been seen as the front-runner for the position.

Marsh said in a prepared statement issued by the Western Australian Cricket Association: "I wrote to the Indian Cricket Board 10 days ago indicating that I was withdrawing my interest in the position."

"I withdrew for the same reasons that I stepped down from my role as Australian coach in September, 1999 - to spend more time with my family."

Marsh said he was content to remain coach of local club side Willetton, where his 17-year-old son, Shaun, is a star all-rounder.

Shaun Marsh, one of three children in the family, is yet to make his first-class debut, but shrewd judges say that could be close. He is considered an exceptional talent who will make a major impact on the game over the next few years.

CBI report not before next month

NEW DELHI, Oct 17: The Indian government's report into match-fixing in cricket has been finalised, but is unlikely to be made public for at least another month, Sports Minister Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa said on Tuesday, reports AFP.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is expected to hand over the eagerly-awaited report, which may name four Test stars, to Dhindsa later this week.

Dhindsa, however, said he will first unveil the report in parliament, which is scheduled to convene for its winter session on November 20.

"Parliament witnessed an uproar over the match-fixing issue, hence the report would also be tabled there," the sports minister said.

Asked if the government will take any action on the report, Dhindsa said: "Let me first read it. We will think of the future course of action only after that."

Media reports quoted CBI sources as saying that four unnamed Indian cricketers are likely to be named in the interim report.

Teacher vs student

LONDON, Oct 17 (AFP). On a stage in a London television studio, Garry Kasparov sits motionless.

Only his eyes flicker over the pieces before him. His brow is furrowed. The world's number one chess player is under pressure.

On the opposite side of the board sits his opponent, 25-year-old Vladimir Kramnik, Kasparov's former pupil and

winner.

The venue seats only 200 people - entrance fee 20 pounds (29 dollars) and mobile phones are strictly forbidden.

But millions of chess amateurs are following the match through the Internet and in the news media. Every move is analysed by grand masters across the world.

The 37-year-old Russian number one is a man of aggressive tactics and killer instincts, and has lost very few games

since 1985. But his young countryman seems to have edged ahead in the psychological battle being waged across the chequered board.

Preparation for each game takes place in detail, and this extends to the choice of food and drink for contestants.

Each player selected his own seat. Kramnik chose a black vinyl-covered swivel chair. Kasparov preferred a low round-backed tan leather armchair.

But now, after the fifth match, it rings true. The pupil is giving the master a run for his money.

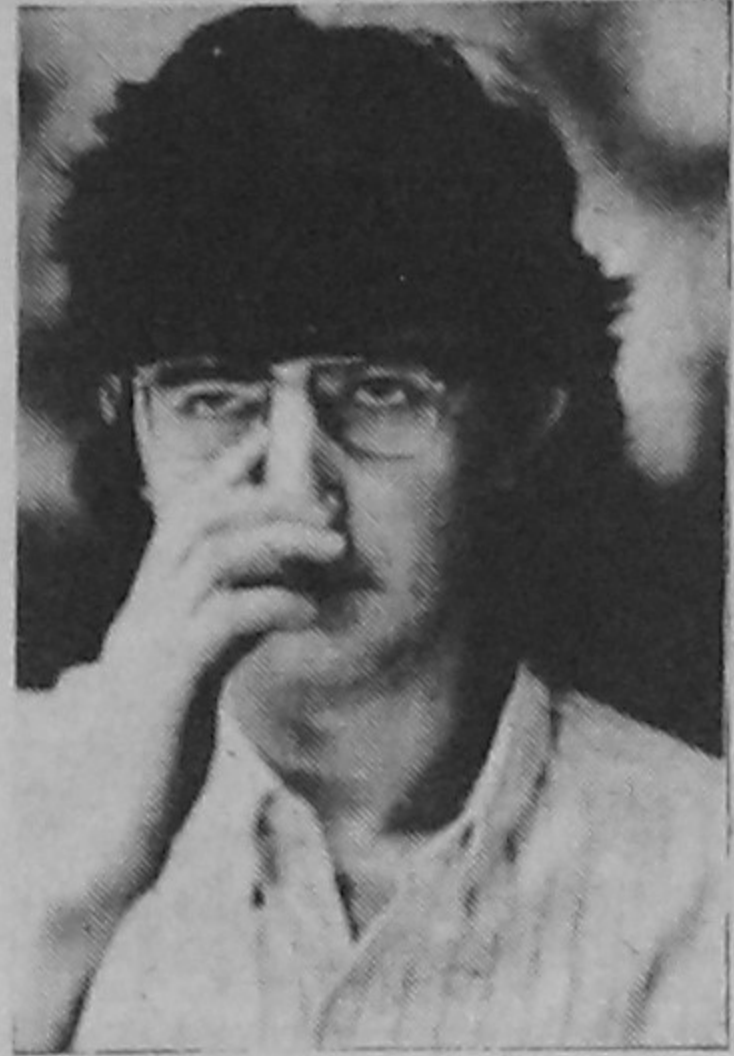
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VLADIMIR KRAMNIK



GARY KASPAROV

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The young Russian is winning by three points to two after five games in the Brain Games World Championship being staged in London's Riverside Studio.

The prize money in the 16-game contest is 1.6 million pounds (two million dollars), of which two-thirds will go to the

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Their rest areas, just off stage, where the players can retire to eat, drink and think about the next move, are furnished with arm-chairs, tables, lamps and mini fridges.

Kasparov only drinks Evian water during the games. Kramnik has mineral water, orange juice and Coca-Cola and chocolate available. All the items, including the chocolate bars, are strictly checked in advance by the three referees, just in case a secret message has been smuggled inside.

Kasparov lost the second game in the series - a move which boosted interest in the contest.

The fifth game ended in a draw on Sunday after three hours and 24 moves, with both competitors showing the strain after their marathon six-and-a-half hour match the day before, which was also tied.

Observers believe Kasparov is facing his toughest opponent since his historic series of clashes with Anatoly Karpov between 1984 and 1990.

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Vieri may be back on November 1

MILAN, Oct 17: Inter Milan's Italian international forward Christian Vieri will return to action on November 1 in a Serie A match with AS Roma at the San Siro. Inter coach Marco Tardelli said Monday, reports AFP.

"Christian is doing well and the doctors have confirmed he should be able to play in the Inter-Roma match," said Tardelli. "Before that game we will organise a friendly for him so he can get to know all the players."

Vieri, who signed for Inter from Lazio for a then world record fee of 49 million dollars, had an injury-hit 1999-2000 season with his right leg proving particularly troublesome.

He has not played since the play-off match with Parma on May 23 to qualify for the European Champions League preliminary rounds.

Vieri played for only 30 minutes in that match - won 3-1 by Inter - before injury forced him out.

Cole concern for United

LONDON, Oct 17: Manchester United could be without England striker Andrew Cole when they face PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday's crucial European Champions League clash at Old Trafford, reports AFP.

Manager Sir Alex Ferguson is anxious to give Cole as long as possible to recover from the ankle injury which kept him out of Saturday's 3-0 Premiership win at Leicester, and the forward did not train Monday.

United currently lie in third place in their group behind PSV and Dynamo Kiev, and know a win would boost their hopes of qualifying for the second phase.

"I think the players will be up for this one and certainly we will be playing our strongest team on Wednesday," said Ferguson.

David Beckham and Gary Neville trained today (Monday) but we will have to wait and see how Andy Cole is. Other than that everyone else is fit."

Leipold to lose gold medal

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, Oct 17: The medical commission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recommended that their executive committee strip German wrestler Alexander Leipold of his gold medal for doping, German sports agency Sid reported Monday, says AFP.

The 31-year-old Leipold won the Olympic free-style wrestling title in the 76kg class, ahead of American Brandon Slay and South Korean Eun Jae Monn.

Shortly after the Sydney games closed the IOC confirmed the existence of two positive dope tests which ABC, the Australian television network, reported involved two weightlifters.

German regional daily Rheinische reported at the weekend that "suspicion surrounding Alexander Leipold is growing."

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American Paul Goldstein hits a backhand return against China's Zhang Yu at the Shanghai Open on October 16.

Again rain interruption

SHANGHAI, Oct 17: Swede Magnus Norman was getting used to playing the tennis waiting game with rain plaguing the 375,000-dollar Shanghai Open for the second straight day Tuesday, reports AFP.

The top seed won the title here a year ago at the Xian Xia Tennis Centre on a Monday after he and Marcelo Rios were rained off by the weather a day earlier.

This year the Chinese weather has struck at the start of a dismal week, all but halting any progress in both the men's event and a new women's tournament at the site.

Norman was due for an opening-round contest Tuesday night against Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi. But that match was looking all but impossible as intermittent rain kept up.

Nevertheless, the 24-year-old Swede has voted his opposition to the long-shot possibility of installing a sliding roof

over a tennis stadium built for this tournament only a few years ago.

The reason is entirely professional: "It may be an advantage to have a roof for rain, but I think playing outdoors is better for my game."

Norman added: "I don't think they need a roof, it's an outdoor tournament and that's what it should stay. They've always managed to finish despite the rain."

Since the tournament moved to the site in 1998, weather has been a worry. Michael Chang won the final two years ago after a 24-hour rain delay, beating Goran Ivanisevic. That was followed by Norman's fifth title of 1999 against Chile's Rios last autumn in their delayed confrontation.

The efficiency of an optional covering was demonstrated at last week's Japan Open, when the admittedly ponderous - but highly effective - roof at the Ariake Coliseum was closed, notably to allow Sunday's men's final to proceed

with just an hour's delay when showers struck.

Holland's Sjeng Schalken, the winner, and finalist Ecuador's Nicolas Pietrangeli both had to be grateful for the miracle of a dry court.

Both men are competing here this week, with China debutant Lapentti seeded second and Schalken seventh.

The South American is due to begin against Orlin Stanojevic while Schalken was to face Belgian Christophe Rochus - weather permitting.

Three early matches got through a set before rain set in. Late in the afternoon, tournament and ATP Tour officials began their first modifications to the 13 men's first-round matches on the schedule, wiping out a pair of matches on an unit court.

Women's officials were considering the possibility of taking their entry-level tournament indoors if a suitable site - possibly a luxury hotel with courts - could be found in time.

SYDNEY SIDELINES

SYDNEY, Oct 17: Paralympic notebook for Tuesday, reports AP.

VILLAGE TENSION Tension over Middle East peace talks has spilled into the Athletes Village in the days leading up to the Paralympics.

Paralympic delegations from Israel and Palestine are both housed inside the Village, while in Egypt the respective political leaders of both nations were meeting in an emergency peace summit.

Israeli team spokesman Reuven Heller admitted Tuesday that tension was heightening in the Paralympic Village, although he said athletes were making every effort to be civil to each other.

"I met Palestinians, we shake hands," he said. "We are treating them as human beings who are disabled and not as Arabs and not as enemies. But you can feel a bit of tension in the atmosphere."

Heller said the tension was affecting the preparations for competition.

"Our athletes are every hour next to the TV," watching news reports, he said.

Heller said it was impossible to separate talk of the Middle East conflict from the Paralympics, as about 70 per cent of the Israeli team had sustained injuries in battles.