

Records out of threat

MUMBAI, Dec 9 (Internet report) The Indian board has declared that they had no plans to erase the records of the four suspended Test players named in a report on match-fixing.

Moody to change trade

PERTH, Dec 9: Former Australian Test and one-day cricketer Tom Moody will end his days as a player next April to become Director of Cricket with Worcestershire County Cricket Club, reports AFP.

Moody, 35, announced Saturday he had signed a three-year deal with the club and would spend most of his time in England with his wife and family.

At present captain of Western Australia, he will retire as a player at the end of this season to take on the new role.

Moody said: "Worcester will be an eight month a year job. So this has to be my last season with Western Australia."

Kumble's return will be delayed

NEW DELHI, Dec 9: Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble, sidelined since October with a shoulder injury, said today that he was still not sure when he would return to action, reports Reuters.

India's second highest Test wicket-taker said he was undergoing physiotherapy and rehabilitation exercises to get his shoulder back in shape.

"I'm not sure. I have to see. But there's nothing new to hurry up for," said Kumble.

A proposed tour of Pakistan planned to start later this month was cancelled by the Indian government because of tensions in the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir.

The next big engagement for India is when Australia tours the country in February for three Tests and five one-day internationals.

The 36-year-old complained of shoulder pain and was ruled out midway through India's campaign in the Sharjah Cup triangular one-day tournament late in October.

He missed the one-off Dhaka test against Bangladesh in November and was ruled out of the current home series against Zimbabwe on medical advice.

Kumble said he was following a rehabilitation programme worked out by South African specialist Mark Ferguson and Indian team's physiotherapist Andrew Leupis.

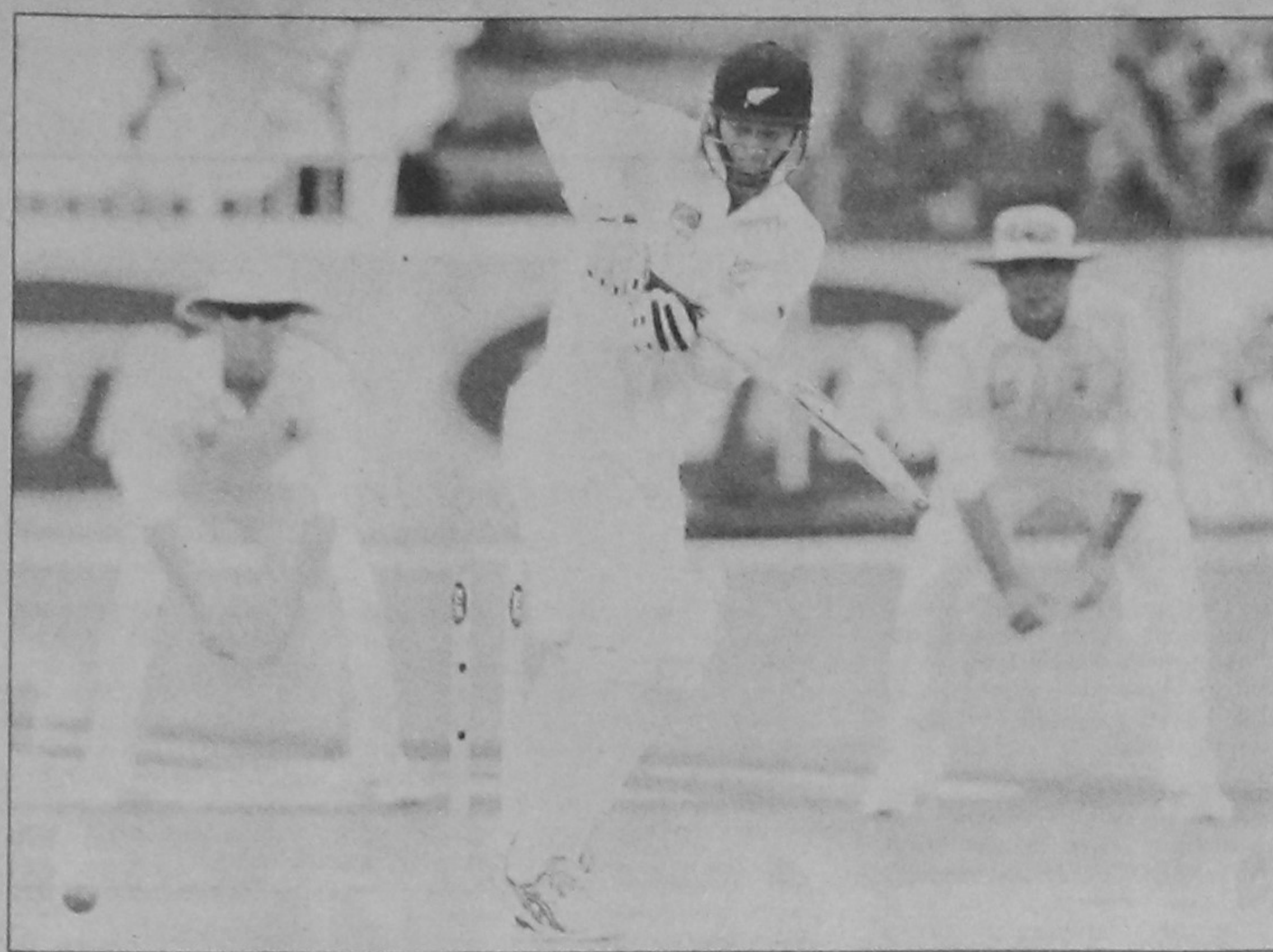
"It's general physiotherapy and rehabilitation, he said.

The bowler said pain in his shoulder, attributed to over-exercising every time he tried to bowl. "It hurts whenever I lift my shoulder," he added.

Kumble's absence was felt in the second game of the two-Test series against Zimbabwe in Nagpur where Andy Flower struck an unbeaten 232 to help the visitors salvage a draw.

Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly said after the match that Kumble's presence would have made a difference on an ideal batting track.

The spinner, with 276 wickets, is India's second highest Test wicket-taker after paceman and former captain Kapil Dev's 334.



New Zealand's Mark Richardson tackles a rising delivery on the second day of the third and final Test against South Africa in Johannesburg yesterday. —AFP photo

Ntini tears Kiwis apart

JOHANNESBURG, Dec 9: South African fast bowlers, Makhaya Ntini and new cap Mfeneke Ngam, ripped the heart out of the New Zealand batting on the second day of the third and final Test at the Wanderers Stadium on Saturday, reports AFP.

New Zealand were 121 for six at tea, with Ntini having taken three for 19 in 15 overs, while Ngam captured the key wicket of top-scorer Mark Richardson in the first over after lunch.

Richardson made 46 before edging a lifting ball from Ngam to wicketkeeper Mark Boucher.

Ngam, 21, made an impressive debut, consistently bowling at speeds in excess of 140 kilometres (84 miles) an hour with a fastest delivery of 147 kilometres an hour.

He could have had a wicket with his fourth ball in Test cricket if Daryll Cullinan had held a straightforward catch at first slip off makeshift opener Adam Parore.

Cullinan put down a second chance from Parore off Ngam before Ntini dismissed the New Zealand wicketkeeper, who was promoted to open the innings after Craig Spearman was left out of the team.

Ngam gained his first Test cap when Allan Donald withdrew with a stomach muscle injury. With Ngam and Ntini both in action, it was the first time two black Africans played for South Africa in the same match.

South Africa put down four catches as New Zealand reached 83 for one at lunch, with Boeta Dippenaar grassing difficult chances at short leg from Parore and Richardson, off Shaam Pollock and Ntini respectively.

But Ngam struck with the fourth ball after lunch. Five balls later Pollock had Mathew Sinclair caught at third slip.

Ntini yorked New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming and had Nathan Astle caught at second slip.

Jacques Kallis plunged New Zealand into further trouble when Craig McMillan fended a catch to second slip.

Hamish Marshall, making his Test debut, survived a torrid spell including a blow on the helmet when he ducked into a bouncer from Ntini. At tea he was still on nought after batting for 37 minutes and facing 24 balls.

There was no play on the first day because of rain and Pollock had no hesitation in sending New Zealand in on an overcast day.

South Africa lead the series 2-0

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard at tea on the second day of the third and final Test between South Africa and New Zealand at the Wanderers Stadium on Saturday:

Table with columns: NEW ZEALAND: First innings, Richardson c Boucher b Ngam 46, Parore c McKenzie b Ntini 10, Sinclair c Klusener b Pollock 24, Fleming b Ntini 14, Astle c Kallis b Ntini 12, McMillan c Klusener b Kallis 4, Marshall not out 4, Walker not out 4, Extras (lb-3, nb-4) 7, Total (For 6 wks in 61 overs) 121. To bat: S O'Connor, D Tuffey, C Martin.

Table with columns: SOUTH AFRICA: S Pollock, G Kirsten, H Dippenaar, J Kallis, D Cullinan, N McKenzie, L Klusener, M Boucher, N Boje, M Ntini, M Ngam. Umpires: David Orchard (South Africa) and George Sharp (England).

Lazy Inzy at his best

KARACHI, Dec 9 (Internet report) Almost eight years ago, a baby-faced 21-year-old, shy and retiring despite his imposing size, approached Imran Khan and requested to be dropped from the Pakistan side.

Riddled with self-doubt after a lean patch with the bat, Inzamamul Haq, not long an international player, simply did not want to be considered for the World Cup semifinal against New Zealand.

Imran, as shrewd a judge of a cricketer as Pakistan have produced, refused to listen.

Pakistan had defied all expectations to reach the semifinal — they would have been knocked out had they not taken a point for a rainied-off match against England in which they had been bowled out for 74 — and Imran preferred instead to point to his side's destiny as world champions.

That destiny seemed no more than a pipe dream when Pakistan still needed 123 runs from 15 overs to beat New Zealand.

Enter Inzamam to blast 60 from 37 balls, with seven fours and a six, to win the match with an over to spare.

Again, in the final against England, Pakistan were laid low before Inzamam meted some purpose with 42 not out of 35 balls to carry the total to match-winning proportions.

It was typical Inzamam hunched over his bat, with droopy eyes turned reluctantly towards the bowler before lashing out fearlessly at an unsuspecting opponent.

Known as a good-natured, gentle giant who likes to laze on his hotel bed whenever he is away from home, he once waded into the crowd during a "friendly" one-day international in Toronto, but cocked behind his head, chasing down a megaphone-touting heckler.

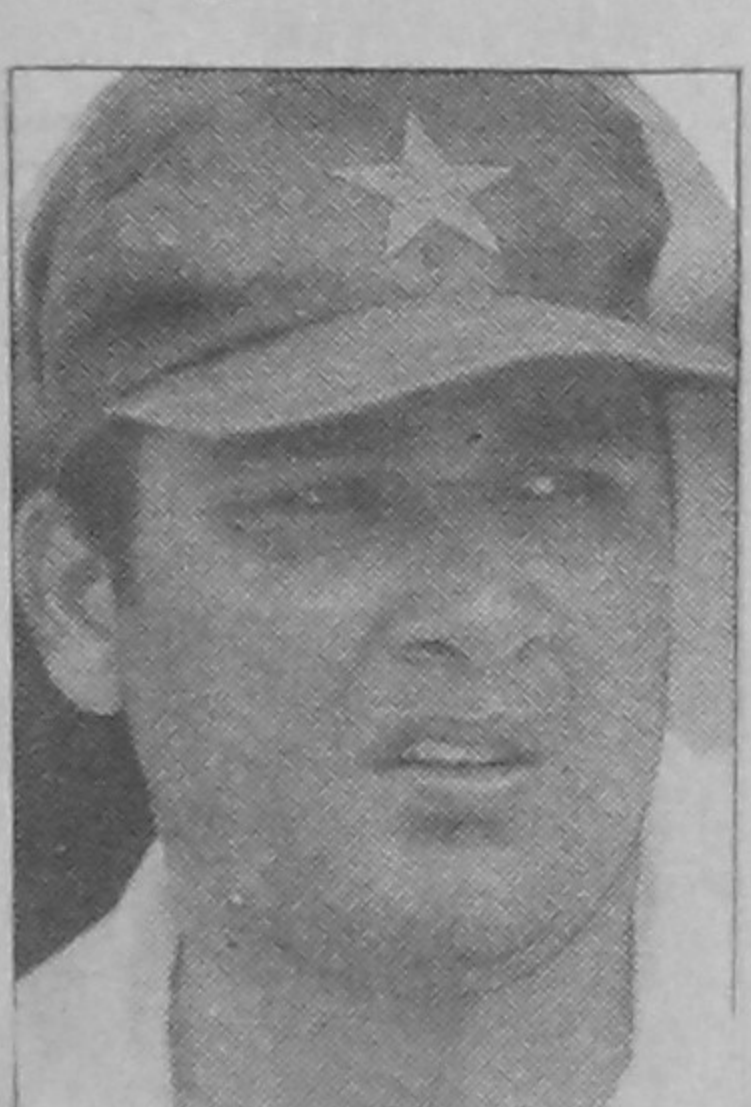
"I was calling him a potato in Punjab because he is a little fat," said the heckler after being ushered to safety.

Inzamam is clearly no fool. The resulting two-match ban was a price well worth paying.

Likewise, it would be wrong to dismiss Inzamam as someone who has been granted undeserved opportunities to rise to the top on the basis of his reluctance to participate in team training sessions.

Born and brought up in Multan, a provincial town of few luxuries, he grew up playing what passed for cricket on a stretch of grassless parkland.

His sleepy demeanour also



INZAMAMUL HAQ

belies experiences of subcontinental combustibility — in the avalanche that greeted his return to Multan after the 1991-2 World Cup, his brother had two fingers blown off by a celebratory firecracker.

From humble beginnings, Inzamam became, according to Imran, the equal of Viri Ricchards at the same age (24), and is now the scorer of 12 Test hundreds and almost 5,000 Test runs at an average of over 46.

The latest of those hundreds, against England in Karachi, saw him become the heaviest run-scorer in Test cricket in the year 2000, surpassing Andy Flower, Michael Atherton and his teammate, Younis Youhana.

Everything about Inzamam's career could be seen in that innings.

He needed a slice of luck to make it into double figures.

But those who complain that he was fortunate to survive an lbw shout that looked plumb in front should remember that Mark Taylor looked just as plumb on nought when he scored 334 not out in Peshawar and Mr Unlucky himself, Nasser Hussain, was ruled not out when a huge snick went undetected by the umpire at an early stage of his maiden Test century against India.

Slowly, but very surely, Inzamam's footwork became more confident as the pressure on Pakistan eased and he worked his way through the twenties and thirties.

And then for the avalanche — four fours in five balls off Ashley Giles to power to his half-century. He progressed to 99, then blocked the first ball before sending the next racing to the off-side boundary.

Off came the helmet and up went the arms in celebration.

He might be known for having made other children run between the wickets for him when he was at school, and as someone who prefers a snooze to social chit-chat after a day's play, but Inzamam is nothing if not passionate about scoring runs for Pakistan — in an endearingly dozy kind of way, of course.

Staelens on way to Japan

BRUSSELS, Dec 9: Former Belgian international defender Lorenzo Staelens is poised to join Japanese Second Division side Oita, the Belgian press reported Friday, says AFP.

The 36-year-old Staelens, captain of Belgian first division champions Anderlecht, said that he was interested in finishing off his playing career in Japan and travelled there Thursday to negotiate the deal.

To refuse Oita's proposal would be like knowing the winning combination for the Lotto and being forbidden from playing," said Staelens.

According to the reports, Staelens, who can leave Anderlecht on a free transfer, will be paid 328,000 dollars on signing the deal, 221,000 dollars for the season and further bonuses for wins.

Yet when Adams won the toss for the first time in five first-class matches, he fielded.

That condemned his bowlers, who have performed decently in the Tests but were seriously undermined here following the late withdrawal of Courtney Walsh with a bad back, to a punishing day.

Adams defended his decision, saying the first morning often provided movement and if he could have picked up two or three wickets before lunch, it would have been justified.

The outcome was predictable, with the only failure being Tasmanian opener Jamie Cox.

Maher's was the dominant innings. He gave only one almost impossible chance in a display of patience interspersed with aggressive drives and pulls, before being bowled by Colin Stuart with the second new ball just before stumps.

He hit 15 fours and a six in his 339-minute innings.

Martin Love scored 76, putting on 156 with Maher, and captain Damien Martyn a brisk 37 — a total he would consider a failure at Bellarine.

But if, as speculated, this match is also a trial to see whether Martyn or Western Australian teammate Simon Katich will replace Steve Waugh in the third Test in Adelaide, the manner of Martyn's short innings should ensure he did himself no harm.

Katich, however, was still there, on 25 and in ominous touch.

He will resume on Sunday with Brad Hodge (2), who has been plundering runs for Victoria.

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World Chess C'ships

Grischuk storms into last eight

NEW DELHI, Dec 9: Teen-age Grand Master Alexander Grischuk of Russia stormed into the quarterfinals Friday by defeating Estonia's Grand Master Jaan Ehvest in the fourth round tiebreaker games of the World Chess Championships 2000, reports AP.

Grand Master Alexie Shirov of Spain made it to the last eight too with a comprehensive victory over Israeli Grand Master Boris Gelfand.

Playing white in the first game, 17-year-old Grischuk went for the blood right from the word go and castled on the Queenside in the Sicilian defense employed by Ehvest.

After a complex middlegame, exchanges took place and the players arrived at a Rook and pawns endgame where Grischuk had an extra pawn. The material imbalance proved decisive in Grischuk's favor.

In their second game, Ehvest got a customary advantage against the Queens gambit but he could not really make an impression. The game was drawn in another Rook ending that lasted 65 moves.

Shirov was at his tactical best in the first game against Gelfand. In an interesting duel arising out of a Sicilian where the former was white, Shirov got a firm control in the centre and his space advantage tied Gelfand on all corners of the board.

The pressure became difficult to handle and Gelfand lost a piece in complications in a reign in 26 moves. In the second game, Shirov, stuck with his favorite Queens Gambit, accepted and got a comfortable position in the middlegame. The pieces got exchanged in a tandem and it was soon a minor piece endgame on board.

With his Bishop checking the Knight to make any successful headway, Gelfand agreed to the draw after 72 moves.

Grand Master Evgeny Bareev of Russia put it across Grand Master Boris Gulko in the first set of tiebreaker games to move into the quarterfinals. In the first game, Bareev faced the English opening and had a comfortable draw. The second game turned the fortunes in Bareev's favor when Gulko fumbled in the Nimzo Indian defense and was sent packing.

In the Womens section, women's Grand Master Qin Kanying of China defeated International Master Corina Peptan of Romania in the 15 minutes tiebreaker games to qualify to the semifinals.

International Master Alisa Marie of Yugoslavia beat Alinaura Scripcenko — Lautner of Moldova to make it to the next stage.

Mixed day for Aussies



BARCELONA, Dec 9: The Davis Cup winds of change snuffed on Spain here in Catalonia as Australia were dealt a blow that only the hard-end shell of tennis players bent on revenge could be sure to overcome, reports AFP.

Lleyton Hewitt, who threw off the memory of two singles losses in last year's Davis Cup final to give Australia the opening point of this year's final against Spain, had to watch in anguish as Pat Rafter conceded his rubber as his teammate fell victim to cramp.

Hewitt beat Albert Costa in a tough five-setter 3-6, 6-1, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 lasting more than four hours to prove that he had finally exorcised the ghosts of Davis Cup past.

But his joy lasted only temporarily as Juan Carlos Ferrero had the noisy Spanish crowd in fuller voice than ever as he ousted Rafter 6-7, 7-6, 6-2, 3-1.

Rafter, who missed last year's win over France in Nice through injury, would have given anything to survive that final hour in his match — but at 1-3 down in the third set against Ferrero and in severe discomfort from cramp, he was forced to concede the tie.

That ensured Saturday's doubles rubber between Alex Corretja and Juan Balcells of Spain and Aussie tandem Mark Woodforde and Sandon Stolle takes on new dimensions as the Spaniards would have been firmly on the ropes had Rafter won his opener.

He won the first set on the tiebreak, roaring back from 0-4 down to win seven points on a roll.

But 20-year-old Ferrero showed he is a quick learner by taking the second tiebreaker and he then swept through the third set as Rafter began to fade away.

"I started getting cramp towards the end of the third set in

my calf, thigh and wrist," explained Rafter. "I don't know why it happened. I was feeling pretty good."

"At the last change of ends New (coach John Newcombe) and I decided that if it got worse I should give it up and save myself for Sunday."

Rafter snatched down 14 aces and looked in excellent form early on but a break point tally of one out of 17 opportunities which came his way told a frustrating story which only got worse.

Ferrero, despite offering condolences to the ill-fated Rafter, was only too glad to embrace his win.

Rafter's retirement means Saturday's doubles encounter takes on a slightly rosier pallor for the Spaniards, a change in fortune that Spain captain Javier Duarte is only too glad to exploit.

"The doubles game is the key, because if we win that we will only be one win away from winning the Davis Cup," said Duarte.

The pressure might now have changed camps, but in Hewitt Australia has a man who is ready to die for the cause.

The young Aussie tamed the hecklers which made up the majority of the 15,000 crowd with a performance which showed that the term 'faint-hearted' has yet to enter his vocabulary.

However, it remains to be seen if general Rafter will be fit to join his young compatriot on the battlefield.

Asked if Rafter would be fit for duty for his reverse singles match against Albert Costa on Sunday, Australia captain John Newcombe still seemed unsure: "That's what we're going to see."

With the crowd booing his every move, Hewitt defied his tender years, thumbed his nose at them all and brought home the first point for the visitors, chasing a 28th title to Spain's none.

Costa was afforded the mantle of would-be Spanish hero, but the young Aussie batter exposed him as miscast in the role as he made up for last year's defeats to Cedric Pioline and Sebastian Grosjean of France.

The slight blip on last year's road to victory was subsequently smoothed over by Mark Philippoussis, who performed the heroics to help pull off a 3-2 victory, but this time Hewitt — who only recently overcame a strength-sapping viral injury — was determined to get in on the winning act himself.



Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero pumps his fist after beating Australian Patrick Rafter in the second match of the Davis Cup final on December 8. —AFP photo

Jimmy proves Jimmy wrong

HOBART, Dec 9: Australia's A opener Jimmy Maher hit 150 as Australia's aspiring Test batsmen queued up to display their wares and compound West Indian misery on Day One of the four-day cricket tour match here Saturday, reports AFP.

Australia's saloon passage to 306 for four at stumps also underlined the oddity of Windies' captain Jimmy Adams' decision to field after winning the toss.

While the result of this match matters little, its context is vital to both sides.

For the Australian team, it is a chance to press claims for Test honours. For the Windies, after losing the first two Tests by an innings, it is a chance for their brittle batsmen — particularly Brian Lara — to find some touch on Bellarine Oval's friendly wicket.

Yet when Adams won the toss for the first time in five first-class matches, he fielded.

That condemned his bowlers, who have performed decently in the Tests but were seriously undermined here following the late withdrawal of Courtney Walsh with a bad back, to a punishing day.

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Katich, however, was still there, on 25 and in ominous touch.

He will resume on Sunday with Brad Hodge (2), who has been plundering runs for Victoria.

Given they had only three specialist bowlers, the tourists

fielded up well.

Stuart was the most successful with 3-76 and Marlon Black the liveliest.

The surprise packet was 19-year-old replacement batsman and part-time spinner Marlon Samuels.

When he was first called to the crease just before lunch, he was less than 24 hours off the flight that ended his three-day journey from Jamaica.

But he bowled with nagging accuracy, and was largely responsible for curbing the run rate in the middle session.

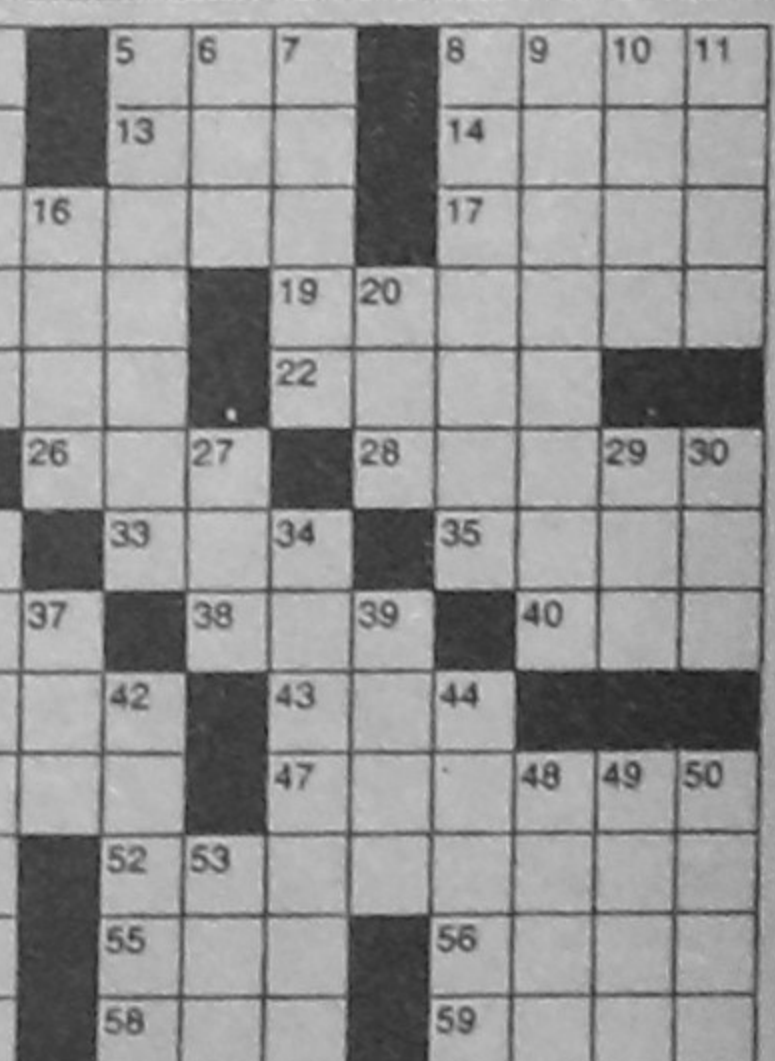
SCOREBOARD Scoreboard on the opening day of the four-day tour cricket match between Australia A and the West Indies at the Bellarine Oval on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA A: First innings Cox b Stuart 6, Maher b Stuart 150, Martyn c Adams b Hinds 37, Katich not out 25, Hodge not out 2, Extras (lb-7, w-1, nb-2) 10, Total (For 4 wks in 92 overs) 306, Fall of wkts: 1-16, 2-172, 3-262, 4-289.

Bowler O M R W Black 16 3 49 0 Stuart 19 0 76 3 Jeremy 20 3 60 0 Adams 12 2 25 0 Samuels 22 4 71 0 Hinds 3 0 18 1

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.



CRYPTOQUIP

DA LRAHW XHHTX ACUA KPEDIW HVUTX LPE HVUXQHEUAHK QELRHXLEX IHA TDCAS AHXAS. Yesterday's Cryptquip: THE FLORIST IS FEELING DISCOURAGED BECAUSE HIS BUSINESS HAS GONE TO SEED. Today's Cryptquip Clue: A equals T. The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal Q throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Atherton

Fall of wickets: 1-29, 2-163, 3-195, 4-256.

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Yousif 22, 3, 58, 2; Razzak 17, 4, 43, 0; Afridi 14, 2, 33, 1; Saqlain 36, 8, 76, 1; Kamaria 34, 14, 54, 0.

Note: Match referee Ranjan Madugalle added one run to England's 78-1 at close on day two crediting one no ball in Saqlain Mushtaq's fifth over.



Swedish legend Bjorn Borg makes a forehand return against American John McEnroe during their Honda Challenge match at the Royal Albert Hall in London on December 8. —AFP photo