

Hooper plays down rumour

JAMAICA, Jan 20 (Internet report): Guyana captain Carl Hooper quashed rumours that he would replace Jimmy Adams as West Indies captain.

Hooper, who has been widely tipped to step into Jimmy Adams' shoes for the tour of South Africa after coming out of a two-year retirement for the 2001 West Indies domestic season, confirmed that speculation was unfounded.

"It is just rumour," he declared.

"Getting back into Test team is not something I am losing sleep over. What I want to do is play over. I retired for Guyana."

"Since I retired I have never been back to play any regional cricket and I still feel I have a few years left in me yet, if not at Test level then at first class level, and I want to give something back to Guyana."

Hooper, 34, who now lives in Australia with his wife and family, said he would have liked to have returned to West Indies regional cricket sooner but contractual obligations to his Victoria club Carlton prevented this.

A West Indies Cricket Board spokesman has said earlier that an announcement will be made over the next couple of weeks, fuelling speculation that changes are afoot after the team's heavy defeats in England and Australia under Adams.

Hooper has not played in the Busta Cup since retiring from international cricket two years ago when he made a sudden departure midway through the one-day series against Australia after his wife and daughter fell ill at their home in Adelaide.

But Hooper has returned to lead a strong Guyana line-up that includes Test batsman Ramnaresh Sarwan.

Katich to debut against Zim

MELBOURNE, Jan 20 (Internet report): High-rated West Australian left-hander Simon Katich will finally make his full international debut here tomorrow in the tri-series cricket match against Zimbabwe.

Drafted into the squad earlier this week, Katich's spell at the top will probably be brief as he is likely to be dropped when the new team is named after the MCG one-day match.

Katich was elevated earlier this week when captain Steve Waugh suffered a minor groin injury and Waugh is expected to return at his expense when the new team is named.

The ESPN will provide live coverage of the match, scheduled to start at 9.30am BST.

But acting captain Adam Gilchrist said today Katich would need to make the most of his chance.

"It may only be a one-off at the moment, but certainly it's encouraging for him to know he's in the set-up," Gilchrist said.

There's tours (India, Ashes) coming up, plenty of incentive to do well.

Katich was in the 1999 tour to Sri Lanka, but was quarantined from the rest of the squad because of chicken pox.

Another illness wrecked last summer, but he regained his touch towards the end of the season and then had a productive winter with English county side Durham.

Paceman Brett Lee bowled in this morning's nets session and should return to the side, meaning opener Glenn McGrath might take a break.

Lee missed this week's rain-affected day over the West Indies as he recovers from a back injury.

Tomorrow's match will be the first time Australia and Zimbabwe have met in the tri-series, with the home side continuing its domination over the West Indies by winning all three games so far.

"It's another challenge to take on now, it will be good to play someone different to the West Indies," Gilchrist said.

"We've had some fairly constant competition against them. I guess, it will be good to test ourselves against someone else."

The Zimbabweans will need to lift after yesterday's 51-run loss to an Australian country XI in Bowral, New South Wales.

The tourists could have done

with former team member Murray Goodwin, now back playing for Western Australia.

Goodwin smashed 167 yesterday in the Warriors' one-day win over NSW at the WACA, setting a record for the highest domestic limited-overs score in this country.

While Zimbabwe sweats over their line-up, Gilchrist is having few problems as his caretaker captaincy draws to a close.

"I really haven't found any distractions to the way I would go about planning my game and performance," he said.

"There's so many guys contributing - I've learnt a great deal."

"You're probably putting a bit more mental energy into it out on the field, because you are constantly assessing everything."

"But I haven't found it taking anything away from my personal performance or my job so far."

Asked if the strong form of the side made captaincy easier, Gilchrist replied: "I would imagine so, ask Jimmy I suppose..."

He was referring to West Indian captain Jimmy Adams, who has suffered through a disastrous Australian tour.

Indo-Pak feud to have its say in Asia Cup?

HONG KONG, Jan 20: The feud between cricket bodies in India and Pakistan is believed to have forced the postponement of the five-team Asia Cup tournament due to take place in Karachi in April. It was reported Saturday, says AFP.

The English-language South China Morning Post quoted Hong Kong cricket officials as saying the tournament - featuring India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Hong Kong - would not now go ahead as planned.

Hong Kong Cricket Association officials Mark Burns told the paper the one-day tournament would now probably take place in 2002.

"It is 95 per cent certain the Asia Cup, due to be held in Pakistan in April, won't take place. In all probability it will be postponed to 2002," Burns was quoted as saying.

The delay means the cash-strapped HKCA will have to wait for a 100,000-dollar windfall they had been promised after surprisingly qualifying for the tournament last year, the paper said.

But Burns said the delay could help the Asian cricket minnows bolster their pool of players as they prepare to take on the Test-playing giants in the tournament.

"While the delay will give those players on the fringes of qualifying the opportunity to play under the residency rule, it will also mean that others will get older."

Yevgeny's verbal volley



Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov in action against Chris Woodruff of the United States during their game of the Australian Open yesterday.

where ridiculous.

"I don't really care what the American democratic opinion is," fired Kafelnikov.

"If you look at the press this morning the only ones who made a statement were the Americans... Sampras, Agassi and Martin."

"Besides them, nobody even spoke about it."

Kafelnikov, one of the straight shooters on the tennis circuit, has been widely ridiculed for his comments, but typically he didn't back off Saturday.

"I'm a standup guy and I say what I want to say. Some guys don't appreciate that, but I don't really care much."

The maverick Russian said he had strong support from other players, adding, "I even got support from the female locker room, thanks very much to Lindsay [Davisport]. She supported me."

Agassi, particularly, was caustic in responding to Kafelnikov's more pay calls.

"He should take his prize money when he is done here and go and buy some perspective," said Agassi Friday.

"At the end of the day would be hard pressed to spend time with a person who thinks making hundreds of thousands of dollars is not enough money."

Sampras clipped in: "I think we're all overpaid. We play a sport and we get paid very well. I play for the titles, Yevgeny plays every week, so you know what he likes."

Kafelnikov ignited the debate on Thursday when he said among other things: "If you look at tennis players, to win a tournament, win five matches at the absolutely lowest level tournament and you make only 42,000 dollars."

"I think it is quite bizarre to see that kind of money in a tennis game."

Kafelnikov, a winner here in 1999 and a runner-up to Agassi last year, set up a fourth round meeting with Sweden's Andreas Vinciguerra.

"I played him a couple of months ago in Stockholm Open and I have a quite a bit of an idea what I need to do to get a victory."

"What that was, the cagey Kafelnikov would not say."

Asked what he planned to do against Vinciguerra, Kafelnikov said: "I'm not going to talk to you about that... I'm not going to share those thoughts with you right now."

'Life wasn't good in Zim'

MELBOURNE, Jan 20 (Reuters): Former Zimbabwe Test batsman Murray Goodwin made a record-breaking 167 for Western Australia on Friday night but Zimbabwe, currently touring Australia for a limited-overs series, won't be knocking on his door.

Goodwin, 28, played 19 Tests for Zimbabwe, quitting after their tour of England last year. He made three centuries and averaged a healthy 42.84 in his Test career.

"It's entirely up to him," Zimbabwe manager Babu Meenan told this news agency a day after Goodwin posted the highest individual score in the history of Australia's one-day domestic competition.

Asked what would happen if Goodwin decided he wanted to play for Zimbabwe again, Meenan said it was a matter for the cricket board in Zimbabwe.

"It was Murray's decision to leave. If he makes an approach to the board, then we will talk to him."

However, he added that it

was unlikely that a change of heart from Goodwin would allow him to return to the team in time to take part in the triangular series, which finishes with a best-of-three finals series.

Zimbabwe have played only one match so far, losing to West Indies by one wicket, and are doing plenty of soul-searching after their 51-run thumping against Australian Country XI in Bowral, New South Wales state, on Friday.

Goodwin said he was forced out of the game in Zimbabwe by problems with officials.

"I have my reasons, it was such a huge decision to give it up and a very disappointing one because I was forced in that area," Goodwin told reporters in Perth.

"Yeah I miss it, I miss travelling around with the boys because they are actually very good guys. There's not many cricketers in the country so when we're back home we often go out for a meal and socialise together."

Australia host Zimbabwe in the fifth match of the triangular limited-overs series in Melbourne on Sunday. Australia have beaten West Indies three times but are yet to play Zimbabwe in the series.

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MURRAY GOODWIN starting on February 7 at the Sydney Cricket Ground. "I don't think so," Meenan said.

Olimpia, Galaxy on way to Spain

LOS ANGELES, Jan 20: Olimpia of Honduras and the Los Angeles Galaxy of the United States booked their tickets to the FIFA World Club Championship Friday with semifinal wins in the Football Confederation Champions Cup, reports AFP.

Brazilian Denilson Costa's hat-trick lifted Olimpia to a 4-0 victory over Pachuca of Mexico and into the final of the eight-team Champions Cup for the North and Central America and Caribbean region.

They'll face the Galaxy, who defeated Major League Soccer rival DC United 4-2 on penalties after they played to a 1-1 draw.

Both finalists will play in the second edition of FIFA's World Club Championship in Spain in July.

In the first semi-final, Costa scored his first goal in the 35th minute, and added two more in the 58th and 78th.

Olimpia's fourth goal came from Honduran international veteran Alex Pineda Chacon, in the 49th.

Goalkeeper Kevin Hartmann was the Galaxy's hero, stopping United's Bolivian star Marco "El Diablo" Etcheverry and Beni Olsen in the shoot-out.

Greg Vanney, Peter Vagenas, Simon Elliott and Salvadoran Maricelo Cienfuegos all made their attempts in the shoot-out.

Both of the regular-time goals were penalties, the first converted by Vanney in the 23rd minute after Colombian Carlos Llamasa fouled Ezra Hendrickson.

Etcheverry converted the other in the 47th after the Galaxy's Alex Lalas brought down A.J. Wood in the penalty area.

Ferreira's misfortune

MELBOURNE, Jan 20: A freak accident sent South African number one Wayne Ferreira tumbling out of the Australian Open on Saturday, reports AFP.

The fifth seed was beaten 6-0, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 by rising young Swede Andreas Vinciguerra but it was never a fair contest after Ferreira made the mistake of trying to catch a ball with his left hand during the warm-up.

The ball caught the top of the middle finger leaving the 29-year-old with a suspected torn ligament and severely hampering his ability to hit his normal two-handed backhand.

"It took me the first jet just to overcome the pain," Ferreira said.

"Then I got used to that a bit but there were a lot of shots on the backhand side where, when

I tried to grip the handle, I had a lot of pain."

"I wasn't able to hit my backhand well so I wasn't able to get the opportunities to hit more forehands, which is what I like to do."

"That's the way I have to play against him to beat him and the backhand killed me."

Having grown up playing a double-handed backhand, Ferreira did not have the option of switching styles. "My single-handed backhand is pretty awful actually," he confessed.

The South African was unsure how serious the injury was but indicated that it could force him to pull out of the doubles. Ferreira and partner Yevgeny Kafelnikov are the third seeds and are due to play Americans Justin Gimelstob and Scott Humphries on Sunday.

"The ball hit me on the top of the finger in the nail and the doctor says probably tore a ligament. He's not 100 per cent

sure exactly what it is but it came up bruised pretty quickly and I had a really tough time trying to hold the tennis racket."

"I'll have to see tomorrow (Sunday). If it is still sore, tomorrow I will probably go and get some x-rays done to see if there is anything wrong with it."

It was a bitter blow for Ferreira who had come into the tournament with his confidence on a high after a successful 2000.

"It's very disappointing. I would have loved to have given myself the best opportunity to win that match. It's always nice to play the young guys and see how good they are and how well I can compete against them."

Vinciguerra, the son of an Italian immigrant to Sweden, described the win as the biggest of his career to date. But he will have to lift his game another notch to get past his next opponent, Kafelnikov.

No Johnson-Greene showdown

LONDON, Jan 20: Olympic great Michael Johnson's last year on the track will not feature the race athletics fans everywhere want to see - a head-to-head with bitter rival Maurice Greene, reports AFP.

The 33-year-old, who recently confirmed he would not be taking part in the World Championships in Edmonton.

Chopra did no wrong

UNDATED, Jan 20 (Internet report): Nikhil Chopra has been declared innocent of all accusations that he had been involved in match-fixing in the past by the disciplinary committee of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), reports AFP.

The committee met in Chennai on Thursday and found him innocent of all charges.

BCCI president AC Muthiah told reporters after a long meeting that Chopra had attended the meeting, and his evidence had convinced the BCCI that he was innocent.

Muthiah said that Chopra is eligible to play for India if the selectors pick him. Chopra himself was not available to comment. He made a surreptitious exit via a side door at the end of the meeting.

Muthiah said that the disciplinary committee was satisfied that Chopra had not collaborated with bookmakers, and was happy with his explanation.

Canada, in August, insists the potential match-up over 200 metres is a no-go.

Looking ahead to his final 'fun' season in the sport, in which he intends to say a world-wide thank-you to his legion of supporters, Johnson dismissed any possibility of a meeting with his fellow American sprint superstar.

The pair still appear to be entangled in the bitter feud that led Johnson to claim 100m champ Greene was "trash-talking" in the build-up to the US Olympic trials last summer when the latter claimed he would take on and beat his compatriot over 200m any time, any place.

Johnson, a five-time Olympic gold medalist and nine-time world-championship victor, crashed out of those trials with injury, as, ironically, did Greene.

The 400m king said that that Greene had blown the showdown out of all proportion and he will not entertain the idea of a race this year.

In London to collect his World Sports Award this week, Johnson said: "Why would I want to do that? Why would I have to gain? Why? Why? Why?"

"He's been running for three years. If I was looking for a challenge then someone like Frankie Fredericks, who has been running at the highest level for years and winning medals, would be a choice."

"I think that's dead, the whole Michael and Maurice thing. So let's put an end to it all now."

"I'm about to retire and you guys can find someone else to put head-to-head," Johnson

added.

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Walsh the best Jamaican

KINGSTON, Jan 20: Cricket superstar Courtney Walsh, the most prolific bowler in Test cricket with 494 wickets, was named Jamaica's sportsman-of-the-year for 2000, reports AP.

The 38-year-old West Indies paceman and veteran of 127 Tests had never before won the award, though for years he has been one of the West Indies' most popular athletes as he dominated cricket opponents and harvested wickets.

The Jamaican surpassed Indian all-rounder Kapil Dev's record of 434 test wickets early last year to become the world's No 1 bowler.

Walsh was named the winner during a meeting of business leaders and sportsmen late Thursday at a Kingston hotel.

Earlier this month, after a disappointing West Indies team tour in Australia, Walsh said he would try to break the 500-wicket mark on home turf during the South Africa team's upcoming West Indies tour.

Athletics stars Deon Hemmings and Lorraine Graham - both two-time silver medalists at Sydney - shared the sports-woman of the year award.

Rusedski in great shape

MELBOURNE, Jan 20: Greg Rusedski, relishing his tennis again after an injury nightmare, swept aside German qualifier Lars Burgsmuller to reach the last 16 of the Australian Open Saturday, reports AFP.

The British 65th-ranked left-hander achieved his career-best result with a fighting five-set win over world No.1 Gustavo Kuerten in the previous round and showed no hang-over from his biggest win.

Rusedski pounded Burgsmuller, breaking his service seven times and winning almost double the points in a breezy 6-1, 6-2, 6-1 victory in 85 minutes. He will next play 15th seed Arnaud Clement of France in Monday's fourth round.

Rusedski has only been under the coaching of Australia's former Wimbledon champion

him for the Australian Open.

"They have made subtle changes to my game, but they make a huge difference."

"My serving motion is more fluid and I have worked on my footwork to get me in the right place to hit the ball."

Before his injury setbacks Rusedski spent three years in the top ten reaching as high as the No.6 ranking.

"Then my injuries began and I tried everything with almost all the doctors. I went to see the best people, but fortunately now I've got it solved and I'm feeling great."

Now Rusedski has Clement barring his way to the quarter-finals.

"It's going to be tough. He hustles around. He's very clever, hits fast serves, hits kick serves and he always trying to put you off balance."

"I'm going to have to play my attacking tennis like I did against Kuerten. I'm going to have to make him return because he's going to come up with some great passing shots."

AUSSIE OPEN NOTEBOOK

MELBOURNE, Jan 20 (AFP): On court Serena Williams is capable of the ruthless efficiency of a hired assassin. But she's really a big softy at heart. "I know it doesn't seem like it, but I'm in tears like that (snaps fingers)," she says. "If I am in any type of scary film or thriller I just start screaming. Venus and I are the only people in the theatre that scream and laugh and cry. We are just way too emotional."

NO VOTE FOR VENUS

Venus meanwhile was giving a rare glimpse of the influence her faith has on her life. Asked for her reaction to George W. Bush taking the presidential oath of office, she revealed that she had not voted in the election. "I'm not political. I'm a Jehovah's Witness. We don't really vote. No matter what happens, we'll be all right."

TENNIS A HANDICAP

FOR HENMAN'S GOLF

Tim Henman's success at the Australian Open is not doing his golf any good. The British number one plays off a handicap of three. But the further he goes in the tournament, the more likely it is that his golf will slip for lack of practice. "I'm three in theory but I haven't played to that standard for a while," he admitted. "I just don't get enough time to play."

The Brit can afford to let things slip a little - his nearest rival on the tennis tour is thought to be Pete Sampras, who plays off nine.

BUT NOT FOR PAT'S CRICKET

Henman's not the only tennis star with other sporting strings to his bow. Pat Rafter showed himself to be a more-than-competent cricketer when he appeared in Aussie wicket-keeper Ian Healy's recent testimonial match. As well as taking a spectacular catch, Rafter hit local rugby league star Allan Langer for three sixes and managed a top-edge four off legendary Pakistani leg spinner Abdul Qadir.

China the mother of football?

TEHRAN, Jan 20: FIFA supreme Sepp Blatter took a mischievous swipe at the conventional theory that England invented football here Wednesday, arguing that the 'beautiful game' in fact originated in China, reports AFP.

Speaking at the four-nation Civilisations Cup tournament here, Blatter said China gave football to the world - and not England as is commonly believed.

Too add insult to injury, Blatter said that England had been way down the league of nations who first embraced early forms of the sport.

"Football originated in China, before being taken up in Egypt. From there it moved into Greece, before going to Rome, France and finally England," Blatter told reporters.

Milo U-15

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SCORES IN BRIEF

Dhaka Metro Blues v BKSP
Dhaka Metro Blues: 135 all out in 42.3 overs (Mazharuddin 33, Faisal 28, extras 47; Asif 3/32)

BKSP: 139 for four in 27.1 overs (Dhiman 47, Naem 44 extras 18)

Barisal Maroons v Chittagong Titans

Barisal Maroons: 138 all out in 42.2 overs.

Chittagong Titans: 140 for nine in 38.1 overs.

Result: Chittagong Titans won by one wicket.

Milo U-13

From page 13

39.4 overs.

Meanwhile, the second semifinal between Metro Blues and Dhaka Colts will be held today at the same venue.

SCORES IN BRIEF

Rajshahi Tista: 190 for nine in 45 overs (Limon 42, Rony 24, Juny 19, Bappy 18, extras 47; Muktar 3/33)

Rajshahi Padma: 138 all out in 39.4 overs (R Siddique 50, Ashrafud 18, extras 32; Faisal 3/14, Juny 2/18)

Result: Rajshahi Tista won by 52 runs.

Siddik

From page 13

OTHER RESULTS

Ladies Winner CR Kim
 Runner-up: Sadiq Qudus
 Second Runner-up: Mohammad Hossain
 Third Runner-up: Ratan Rab
 Best Net: Brig Gen Najeeb Hasan
 Second Best Net: Yelamber C Adhikari (Nepal)
 Third Best Net: C S Jang
 Ladies' Runner-up: Kosaka
 Ladies' Best Net: K S Park
 Ladies' Second Best Net: S N Lee

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Curved line

4 11x MacDonal place

8 Don Johnson character

12 Feathery wrap

13 Drew Carey's home state

14 Regarding Major U.S. river

17 Blue hue

18 Felon's flight

19 Branch of a water-way

21 Shattered device

25 Blue

26 Staff

28 Uses the kiln

32 Pronto, on a memo

34 Method

36 Do a sleeve-dore's job

37 'Airport' Oscar-winner

2 by Aussie hopper

3 'Minnie article

4 2x 'Tokay singer

44 Type of party

46 Arbitr character

50 'Humbul' Oodles

52 Squid entree

56 Urnie '18'

57 Ellipse score

59 Skater's protection

60 Wields a needle

61 Irritate

1 Regis' network

22 Santa

23 Present Aachen

27 Aachen article

29 Bolt/winn desert

30 Cheese choice

31 Video game name

33 Spanish money

35 Shrilk sharp

38 Round Table

9 On the address

10 Luminary

11 Sacred

15 Sacred Grande leader

20 Bill

21 Mediocro

22 Santa

47 Director Kazan

48 Create origami

49 Roof overhang

53 'Paper Chase' subject

54 Play with robots

55 Cartoonist's supply

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13						14	
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CRYPTOQUIP

HT NVWSV YN ESSG
 UWND HT BK UGVYBSTY
 YJS OUTWOUWK HM
 BUHTD BS MHDU OSUMJ
 Yesterday's Cryptquip: I SUPPOSE THAT A HITCHHIKER'S FAVORITE VEHICLE OF ALL IS THE PICKUP TRUCK.
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: U equals A

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solutions is by trial and error.