

Vettori back to Kiwi fold

WELLINGTON, Jan 24: New Zealand left-arm spinner Daniel Vettori is back in the New Zealand squad for the first two of five scheduled limited-overs internationals against Sri Lanka. New Zealand Cricket said on Wednesday, reports Reuters.

Vettori has been out of the team for four months with a stress injury to his back, sustained on the tour of Zimbabwe and South Africa.

But the bad news for the Black Caps was all-rounder Chris Cairns had given up his battle to be fit for any New Zealand matches this summer and decided to undergo knee surgery which would keep him out of international cricket for six months.

Cairns ruled out of New Zealand's recent tour of South Africa because of his troublesome right knee, made a comeback for the first one-day international against Zimbabwe but could bowl only three overs.

Cairns expects to be fit for New Zealand's September tour of Pakistan.

Chairman of selectors Sir Richard Hadlee said, "Daniel Vettori has assured the selection panel that he is 100 per cent fit, ready and very keen to play."

Joining Vettori with a recall to the 12-man squad is Wellington pace bowler Andrew Penn - who was also injured on the tour of South Africa.

"Andrew Penn is a penetrative bowler with an ability to take wickets... In making this selection the panel has opted for an additional strike bowler at the expense of a second spin bowler," Hadlee said.

New Zealand take on Sri Lanka in the first match of the series in Napier on January 31. Geoff Allott, Chris Cairns, Michael Mason, Scott Styris and Shayne O'Connor were not considered due to injury.

SQUAD

Stephen Fleming (captain), Nathan Astle, Mathew Sinclair, Roger Twose, Craig McMillan, Jacob Oram, Chris Harris, Adam Parore, Daniel Vettori, James Franklin, Andrew Penn, Chris Martin.

'Mark, talk or walk'

MELBOURNE, Jan 24: Australian Test batsman Mark Waugh will be dropped unless he agrees to take part in a worldwide investigation into corruption in cricket, reports Reuters.

Australian Cricket Board (ACB) chief executive Malcolm Speed said on Wednesday that Waugh, brother of Australia's



MALCOLM SPEED

captain Steve, had been given 24 hours to change his mind or face automatic suspension.

"It's disappointing that we got to that stage but we weren't able to resolve it any other way," Speed said.

"We have a duty to the public to ensure the matter is being dealt with effectively."

The International Cricket Council's (ICC) Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU), which is due to visit Australia next month, wants to speak to Waugh following allegations he took money from an Indian bookmaker, Mukesh Kumar Gupta, in exchange for information on the team during a six-a-side tournament in Hong Kong in 1992 or 1993.

Waugh was among nine

non-Indian players, including former Test captains Brian Lara, Alec Stewart and Martin Crowe, named in an Indian central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) report into match-fixing last November as having connections with bookmakers.

Waugh and teammate Shane Warne were fined in 1995 after admitting they had accepted money from a bookmaker in 1994 in exchange for information on pitch and weather conditions.

But Waugh has strongly denied these latest charges and had previously said he wanted to co-operate with the investigation to clear his name.

But the 35-year-old announced earlier this week that he had changed his mind after discussing the case with his lawyers and would not face the investigators, leading to widespread calls for his immediate dismissal.

The ACB, which has pledged to do everything it can to stamp out corruption in the game, held an emergency meeting after Waugh's about-turn before deciding to issue him with their ultimatum.

"I have written to Mark on behalf of the directors, asking him to reconsider his position," Speed said.

"The board implores Mark Waugh to change his view and submit to the interview process."

The letter, which was released to media, included specific details of exactly what the ACU wanted to speak to Waugh about.

These were: * The number of occasions Waugh met a bookmaker (or bookmakers) and received money for the provision of information about cricket. * The total amount of money he has received from any parties (other than bona fide me-

dial) for the provision of information about cricket. * The identification of the bookmaker or bookmakers with whom he had dealings with respect to the provision of information about cricket and a description of those dealings. * The identification of current or former international cricket players with whom he had dealings in relation to his contact with a bookmaker or



MARK WAUGH

bookmakers and a description of those dealings.

Clarification of his recollections of any meeting with a bookmaker in Hong Kong in 1992 or 1993 in light of the CBI Report and his response to the references to him in it.

Waugh had flown to Adelaide with the Australian team ahead of Friday's one-day match against West Indies when he was told of the ACB's decision.

He refused to comment on the matter and did not attend the team's afternoon training session.

"Mark did not appear to be unduly surprised by it. I think the best I could say is that he took it on the chin," Speed said.

SL turn back to Tillekeratne

COLOMBO, Jan 24: Sri Lanka have recalled batsman Hashan Tillekeratne for the series against England starting next month, reports Reuters.

The squad announced on Monday also includes batsman Aravinda de Silva who was rushed to South Africa in the middle of Sri Lanka's disastrous tour.

Tillekeratne has not played for the national team since Sri Lanka failed to qualify for the play-off round at the last World Cup in 1999.

"He has been playing very consistently in the local league," said Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka spokesman Chandrisan Perera.

The England series begins with the first Test in Galle in southern Sri Lanka on February 22. Besides further Tests in Kandy and Colombo, England will also play three one-day internationals on their tour, which ends on March 28.

The squad was named before Sri Lanka crashed to an innings defeat on Monday in the third Test, losing the series 2-0. Sri Lanka also lost five of the six one-day internationals in South Africa.

SQUAD

Sanath Jayasuriya (captain), Marvan Atapattu, Mahela Jayawardene, Romesh Kaluwitharana, Kumar Sangakkara, Russell Arnold, Aravinda de Silva, Avishka Gunawardene, Muttiah Muralitharan, Chaminda Vaas, Nuwan Zoysa, Dillhara Fernando, Kaushalya Weeraratne, Eric Upshantha, Ruchira Perera, T.M. Dilshan, Hashan Tillekeratne, Upul Chandana, Niroshan Bandara, Dinuk Hettiarachchi, Sujewa de Silva, Raviudra Puspakumara.

Waugh brothers didn't discuss it

ADELAIDE, Jan 24: Australian cricket captain Steve Waugh said Wednesday that he is yet to speak to twin brother Mark about the latter's refusal to talk to cricket's corruption investigators, reports AFP.

The Australian captain said he had left a message on Mark's phone, but was yet to discuss his brother's refusal to be interviewed.

"We haven't had a chance to talk," Steve Waugh said.

"Some stage we will, but he probably feels like keeping to himself at this stage."

"No-one else knows what's going on behind the scenes or what's occurring. People have all got opinions about it but I think I'll keep mine to myself."

"It's a tough situation at the moment and Mark's obviously being guided by his lawyers and hoping he's going in the right direction," Steve Waugh said.

Streak gives 'em something to cheer about

SYDNEY, Jan 24 (Reuters): Zimbabwe cricket captain Heath Streak awoke on Wednesday knowing that his team's remarkable 47-run win over West Indies the previous night was a rare dose of good news for the people of his troubled African homeland.

"We're all concerned about the future of our country," Streak told reporters on Tuesday night after the match.

"We're kept well informed of what's going on and we feel we've got a duty to people back home. What we do on the cricket field prides a lot of people back home."

"I suppose it's something that we can give back to the people in Zimbabwe and victories like this one are special."

Streak was man of the match, scoring 45 in Zimbabwe's 138 before taking 4-8 off eight overs as West Indies were dismissed for 91, their second lowest total in 412 limited overs internationals.

Streak said the only thing better than beating the West Indies would be overcoming Australia who are unbeaten in four matches so far in the triangular series.

"If we can register a victory against Australia in this tournament, it's something that would really go down well in Zimbabwe," he said.

"It would help the whole atmosphere in Zimbabwe - they need something lightening at the moment."

Agassi declines wedding report

MELBOURNE, Jan 24: Andre Agassi laughed off a report in a German newspaper yesterday saying he would marry Steffi Graf before the end of the year, reports Reuters.

"I just say you keep reading and stay tuned," Agassi, whose romance with Graf keeps making headline news, joked when asked about an unverified front-page story in popular daily Bild.

"You guys have it all figured out over there," added the defending Australian Open champion, speaking after his victory over Todd Martin for a place in the semifinals of the first grand slam event of the year.

Bild, which had previously predicted the couple would get married last year, quoted a friend of Agassi as saying he and Graf kept talking about children.

The paper added that Agassi had purchased a luxury villa near San Francisco where the couple planned to move in after the Australian Open.

BCCSL blames Kenyan spirit

NAIROBI, Jan 24: Sri Lanka cricket officials on Tuesday expressed disappointment at the weak opposition put up by Kenya against their 'A' team here saying their hosts lacked commitment, reports AFP.

The Sri Lankans, backed by seven Test players, comprehensively won two one-day internationals and drew their three-day game in the coastal town of Mombasa and appear set to dominate the remaining three matches of their tour.

"We really thought very seriously about Kenyan cricket. Since they haven't got the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test status, Sri Lanka has decided to support them in their efforts. That's why we've sent a very strong side to Kenya," said Ravin Wickramaratne, executive member of the Board of Control for Cricket in Sri Lanka (BCCSL).

"They have a very good talent in their stores and a great future ahead of them but they need to show a lot of commitment."

"We really expected a lot more fight between the two teams but we come comfortably managed to win in Mombasa," Wickramaratne said.

The Kenyan opposition has not been helped by injuries to their top players including the captain Maurice Oduumbo who sat out the two one-day matches.

However the Kenyans, who seem to be facing a lean spell since hosting the ICC Knock-out Trophy last October could draw support from the Sri Lanka national team which struggled in their tour of South Africa which ended yesterday.

Two members on the touring Sri Lanka 'A' side, skipper and all-rounder Kumar Dharmasena and Ruchira Perera, have been called to reinforce the senior team for the tour of New Zealand beginning on January 25.

English cricket 'empowered'

LONDON, Jan 24 (Internet report): English cricket's newest sponsors will plough 1 million pounds into the domestic Test match game over the next three years.

The backers were confirmed as Npower, the essential services provider. Their involvement, though, is no secret with media articles already having confirmed their commitment to Test cricket in this country.

They take over from Cornhill Insurance, who sponsored England's home matches from 1976 to last season, investing 27.7 million pounds into the game, with 3 million pounds being their outlay in 2000.

The company also sponsors ITV's The Bill and the FA Premier League, and they take over for a high-profile English season with Pakistan (two Tests) and Australia (five-Test Ashes series) the visitors.

England captain Nasser Hussain said: "All the England players are relishing the prospect of taking part in the first Npower Test Series.

"Australia and Pakistan are both top sides with world-class players in their ranks and I'm sure that all cricket fans can look forward to an exciting and closely fought summer of Test cricket."

Thomson doesn't think so

LONDON, Jan 24: Fast-bowling great Jeff Thomson said here Wednesday that the present Australian Test team were far from invincible, reports AFP.

"They are a good side but they haven't been tested lately," said Australia great Thomson, who in partnership with Dennis Lillee formed one of world cricket's most devastating fast bowling duos during the 1970s.

There's not that much between winning and losing," said Thomson at Lord's where England were unveiling a new Test match sponsor.

"Australia haven't really been put under pressure lately. Obviously with guys like Michael Slater in the top order and Adam Gilchrist, a good keeper coming in at seven or even eight, the batting is very strong."

"Brett Lee is a very good bowler. He's as sharp as Shoaib Akhtar of Pakistan," said Thomson, who still holds the official world record for the fastest delivery (99mph).

"But he (Lee) has had a back injury and a back injury is a back injury," said Thomson, whose own pace was reduced due to shoulder problems.

"Jason Gillespie is a good bowler but he too has had back trouble."

Thomson, who assisted Zimbabwe during their tour here last year said he had been impressed by England's recent form which has seen them win three Test series in a row.

"These fellahs (England) have played under a lot of stress for a lot of time but they have started to come through. They've brought some new guys in and I'm sure there is more respect for the England team in Australia than there was a year ago. There was a time 10 years ago when we (Australia) were copying a dogging from everybody but the wheel turns."

After England play two home Tests against Pakistan this summer, Australia visit for a five-match Ashes series and England captain Nasser Hussain is looking forward to the challenge.

"It's been an extraordinary few months for the team but the Australians always surprise me."

"You hear about their batsmen learning to play off good, hard pitches but if you look at the statistics when they come over here, their batsmen - Stuart Law, Justin Langer, Greg Blewett - all do well in county cricket."

"And two of those (Law and Blewett) aren't their current Test team. They are the best team in the world so we know it will be tough."

England have a potentially awkward three-Test tour to Sri Lanka before Pakistan arrive here. England won a three match series 1-0 thanks to Hussain and Graham Thorpe's batting heroics in the final Test of Karachi and the England skipper expects another hard encounter.

"They'll be just as tough here as they were there. Their pace attack of Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Abdur Razaq and the rest is very strong. There'll also be a chance for Mr Thorpe and

Moin to speak again."

The Surrey batsman and the Pakistan wicketkeeper were involved in an on-field row during the final Test as Moin vainly appealed against the light.

"We were actually the best of mates off the field but competitive on it and that's how it should be."

Thorpe made a century on his Test debut, against Australia, in 1993 and is relishing the chance to face them again as England bid to win the Ashes for the first time since Mike Gatting 1986/7 tour.

"Everyone remembers their first game and to score a hundred on debut was a very proud moment for me. I've always liked the way the Aussies play the game but there's a lot of cricket before they arrive."

One of the star attractions ought to be elegant Australian batsman Mark Waugh.

But his international future was under a cloud Wednesday after he was given a 24-hour ultimatum to end his refusal to talk to match-fixing investigators or face being dropped from the Australia team.

"The ACB (Australia Cricket Board) should have been tough with Mark years ago," said Thomson, who added that their current hardline stance smacked of making up for lost time.

Waugh and Shane Warne took money for weather and pitch information from an Indian bookmaker in 1994 but it was not until four years later, under pressure from the Australian press, that the ACB admitted the incident.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN NOTEBOOK

SQUINTING AT SUCCESS

Size is not the only disadvantage France's Arnaud Clement had going into his quarter-final match with Yevgeny Kafelnikov Wednesday. The 1.73m (5'7") tall Clement is one of the smallest players on the men's tour and also has the worst

eyesight. "My doctor tried me with contact lenses but it just didn't work," he told The Australian. "I couldn't play without my glasses."

Perhaps compatriot Mary Pierce should take a leaf out of Clement's book - she is also short-sighted and has frequent problems with contact lenses but prefers to squint at the ball rather than wear glasses.



Russian Yevgeny Kafelnikov wipes his forehead during his Australian Open quarterfinal match against Arnaud Clemente of France yesterday. - AFP photo



World No 1 Martina Hingis of Switzerland shakes hands with American Serena Williams after their Australian Open quarterfinal clash yesterday. - AFP photo

Hingis dashes sisters' hopes

MELBOURNE, Jan 24: Martina Hingis spoiled the Williams sisters driving a wedge through their hopes of a semifinal showdown, reports AFP.

But the world No.1 had to summon all her resolve to counter the power game of Serena in a rollercoaster ride through a classic quarterfinal contest.

She eventually triumphed 6-2, 3-6, 8-6 after two hours 19 minutes of pulsating tennis.

Their titanic battle in the Rod Laver Arena followed Venus's escape against feisty South African Amanda Coetzer.

The pundits were labelling her stunning 2-6, 6-1, 8-6 win the match of the tournament until sister Serena took on Hingis.

The Swiss miss came from 4-1 down in the third set in a seasawing match to strike a blow for technique over brute force.

"I was a double break down," said Hingis. "I just tried to hang in there and fight my way through. It was just a great

comeback."

She classed her tennis in the first set as the best she had ever played.

"That was the best I've played I think the entire career so far," she said. "But I wasn't able to hold it up the whole match."

After the match Serena revealed that she hadn't eaten in two days after going down with food poisoning.

"I wanted a big win today but I wasn't at my best or feeling my best," she said. "I did well considering I haven't eaten in two days, apart from a piece of toast here and there."

But she also paid tribute to Hingis. "She went on adrenalin and a lot of heart and that's what won it in the end."

Third seed Venus Williams fought back from the brink of defeat to beat South African 10th seed Amanda Coetzer 2-6, 6-1, 8-6 today and reach the semifinals.

Coetzer served for the match after breaking Williams to reach 5-3 in the third set, only for Williams to break her serve and then level the set.

The pair traded breaks again before Williams grabbed the crucial advantage in the 13th game.

Coetzer had raced through the first set in just 21 minutes, breaking a sluggish and error-prone Williams's serve twice and then served out the set to love. Williams did not win a point in the first two games and her major contribution to the first set was 19 unforced errors.

That trend was reversed in the second set, with Coetzer becoming a tentative as if shocked to find herself in the lead and Williams getting her wayward groundstrokes under control.

Venus Williams, the reigning Wimbledon and US Open champion, had not made it past the quarter-finals in her two previous appearances at the season-opening grand slam event.

Serena said Venus had assured her she would perform better against Hingis on Thursday. "Unfortunately I'll be in the stand watching instead of taking her on."

And Hingis admitted she would have to move up a level to secure a place in the final against Lindsay Davenport/Jennifer Capriati.

"Every time it is the same thing," said Hingis. "I play one (Williams) then the other one is waiting at a Grand Slam. I'll just try to have a little rest and give my best tomorrow."

Hingis won five Grand Slam titles between 1997 and 1999 but has failed to win one since her third Australian Open crown.

She had beaten Serena in straight sets in a Sydney warm-up tournament earlier this month and looked set to repeat the feat with an impressive start to the match, racing through the first set.

But she couldn't sustain her dominance as Serena's superior firepower began to take effect. At times early in the third set, she looked close to tears of frustration as the match seemed to be slipping away.

But at 4-1 down, she found a new lease of life, matching Serena's breaks and finally wrapped it up on her second match point with a confident overhead that gave an exhausted Serena no chance.

Venus was on the verge of crashing out herself.

She had to dig herself out a hole to break the resolve of the 10th seeded Coetzer in an other nailbiting quarterfinal.

Coetzer served for the match in the third set but Venus pulled back to win.

The ever-confident US Open and Wimbledon champion put her comeback down to her competitive spirit.

"I think it's like a natural reflex," she said. "I think it's just not liking to lose. I don't like to lose. I really just didn't want to."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS		37 Defective car	DOWN	20 K.																											
1 Clothing	5 Knock	8 Opium	12 Skip	13 Lubricant	14 Judicial raiment	15 South American rodent	17 Army mascot	18 Felonious flight	19 Grot lachrymose	21 The House Rules	24 Actress Cannon	25 Weeding tools	26 Former	30 Resident	31 Dawn	32 Adams of Johnson	33 Seizures	35 Brussels-based	36 Has a bug												
2 "What's up, -?"	3 Party	4 Couturier's concerns	5 Peregrinate	6 Melody	7 Odd-looking beast	8 Expensive suit, maybe	9 Soup du-	10 Competent	11 Obstet's need	16 Tavern	20 K. Corral VIP	21 Fashion-able	22 Title	23 Prolound	24 Copulent hagen	25 Signatory's cilizenry	26 Signatory's	27 Here first	28 Dorothy's basketful	29 Aware of, private	34 Did surveillance	35 Less of a moss	37 Mainland-er's memento	38 Hospital section	39 Vacationing	40 Pig holder?	41 Quarrel	44 Simile center	45 Onassis, familiarly	46 Cover	47 Witness

Solution time: 23 mins.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
12					13				14			
15			16						17			
		18				19	20					
21	22	23			24							
25				26					27	28	29	
30			31						32			
33			34						35			
			36						37			
38	39	40				41						
42							43	44		45	46	47
48							49			50		
51							52			53		

CRYPTOQUIP

GVERWL NTC RXXNLVRKNEEJ
VKBCXLVLVQC IHJL
NKB ECNQC CQCTJWDVKI
HG VK WDC NVT
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: TO BE A HUMAN CANNONBALL, I FIGURE SOMEONE MUST BE OF THE RIGHT CALIBER.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: X equals C

The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, 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.