

Russel lauded

WELLINGTON, Reuters

Russel Arnold hit a flawless unbeaten 78 on Saturday to lead Sri Lanka to a three-wicket victory over New Zealand with three balls to spare...

Arnold's perfectly-paced innings drew high praise from Fleming who described it as a "very, very sensible knock".

Fleming added: "He pushed it around brilliantly. If he wasn't there at the end it might have been a different result."

Arnold stood firm and in the penultimate over lofted Chris Martin over the mid-wicket boundary for six leaving just five runs needed off eight balls which they made relatively comfortably.

Sri Lanka skipper Sanath Jayasuriya is confident his team can now go on to win the series.

"We'll have to play really hard because it is not easy in this country," said Jayasuriya.

"But we've won our last three one-day games and I'm very happy with that," he added.

However, despite the defeat, the New Zealand skipper remains bullish about New Zealand's prospects for the series.

"We improved a lot from the first game. I believe we've still got a chance to take the series," he said.

Rajshahi cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rupali Sangha and Juba Cricket School (B) won their respective matches of the Zia Smriti cricket tournament at the Rajshahi Govt College playground today.

In the first match of the day, Rupali Sangha defeated Mohamadpur Tarun Sangha by 24 runs.

Winning the toss, Mohamadpur Tarun Sangha batted first and collected 122 runs for eight cricketers in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Rupali Sangha reached the target of 123 runs losing six wickets in 21.4 overs.

Juba Cricket School (B) recorded a four-cricket win over Noahata Sporting Club in the second match of the day at the same venue.

Juba Cricket School (B) won the toss and batted first. They made 144 for six in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Noahata Sporting Club were all out for 120 in 21.5 overs.

Arnold sees

FROM PAGE 13

Sanath Jayasuriya departed for 38 when he was caught behind by Adam Parore for 38.

Earlier, Parore pulled in a stunning chance in front of first slip to dismiss opener Marvan Atapattu for five.

Slick fielding from Mathew Sinclair also orchestrated the demise of Mahela Jayawardene with a direct hit from point to give Sri Lanka to knock the top of the tourists' batting.

Captain Stephen Fleming and Harris also hit the stumps to remove Kumar Dharmasena and Eric Upshantha but their efforts were ultimately in vain.

The teams will meet for their third match in Auckland Tuesday.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard of the second one-day international between New Zealand and Sri Lanka on Saturday:

NEW ZEALAND: Sinclair c S'kara b D'sena 20, Astle c De Silva b Zoysa 17, Fleming c S'kara b Zoysa 0, Two retired hurt 11, McMillan c and b J'suriya 37, Harris b Zoysa 56, Parore c Atapattu b Fernando 35, Oram b Fernando 2, Vettori not out 6, Franklin b Zoysa 1, Extras: (lb-2, w-9, nb-9) 20, Total: (For 8 wickets in 50 overs) 205, Fall of wickets: 1-34, 2-41, 3-48, 4-125, 5-184, 6-193, 7-195, 8-205

SRI LANKA: J'suriya c Parore b Oram 38, Atapattu c Parore b Martin 5, S'kara c Astle b Oram 13, J'wardene run out (Sinclair) 7, De Silva lbw b Vettori 37, Arnold not out 78, D'sena run out (Fleming) 4, U'shantha run out (Harris) 4, Zoysa not out 14, Extras: (lb-10, w-1, nb-3) 14, Total: (For 7 wickets in 48.3 overs) 206, Fall of wickets: 1-23, 2-56, 3-63, 4-82, 5-145, 6-164, 7-191

Result: Sri Lanka won by three wickets and took a 2-0 lead in five-match series.

Man-of-the-match: Russel Arnold.

Botham tops 'em all

Cricket

LONDON, AFP

Ian Botham's legendary performance in the third Test of the 1981 Ashes Series at Headingley has been voted as the most memorable sporting moment of all time, according to a readers poll carried out by the Observer newspaper.

The all-rounder, who had resigned the England captaincy weeks before, came to the crease on the fourth day with his side staring at a humiliating defeat, but his unbeaten 149 set up a grandstand finish for England to win the Test.

"It was one of those crazy, glorious, one-off flukes," said a modest Botham, writing about his superb innings in this weekend's Observer Sport Monthly (OSM).

Readers voted Manchester United's breathtaking injury-time comeback in the dying minutes of the 1999 Champions' League final in second place, with Gareth Edwards' try for the Barbarians against the All Blacks in 1973 at Cardiff in third spot.

Geoff Hurst's hat-trick which helped England win the 1966 World Cup and Mohammed Ali's Rumble in the Jungle with George Forman in 1974 completed the top five.

Matt Tench, editor of OSM, said: "It is a theme to the top moments, I think it is that people find the unexpected especially thrilling."

"I think the key element of the top six moments was how gloriously surprising they all were."

It is no surprise that in a poll conducted by a British newspaper domestic sporting heroes dominate the list.

However, Brazil's fourth goal in the 1970 World Cup final (position number eight) and Russian gymnast Olga Korbut's gold-medal winning performance at the 1972 Munich Olympics (12) both make it into the top 20.

The poll is unlikely to cut much ice in Australia as the Brisbane 1960/61 Test against the West Indies, a match that featured arguably the most thrilling finish in the history of international cricket, is not included.

Nor is this list of '100 most memorable sporting moments' likely to be well received in the United States — not a single American sport is listed.

Like many similar lists the poll is also a reflection of the power of 'the box'. All the top 20 moments were witnessed by a mass audience on British terrestrial television.

OSM's 20 most memorable sporting moments:

- 1. Ian Botham's 149 for England in the third Test against Australia in 1981.
2. Manchester United's comeback in injury time to win the 1999 Champions League final.
3. Gareth Edwards' try for Barbarians against the All Blacks in 1973.

4. Geoff Hurst's hat-trick in the 1966 World Cup final.
5. Mohammed Ali versus George Foreman in 1974.

6. Paul Gascoigne's tears during the 1990 World Cup semi-final.
7. Steve Redgrave winning his fifth Olympic gold medal in Sydney.

8. Brazil's fourth goal in the 1970 World Cup final.
9. Dennis Taylor's black ball finish against Steve Davis in the 1985 World Snooker Championship final.

10. Roger Bannister running the four-minute mile in 1954.
11. Michael Thomas' goal which won Arsenal the First Division title in 1989.

12. Gymnast Olga Korbut at the 1972 Olympics in Munich.
13. Torvill and Dean's gold medal performance at the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo.

14. Michael Owen's goal for England against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup final in France.
15. Ben Johnson 'winning' the Olympic 100m final in 1988.

16. Linford Christie taking the gold medal at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics.
17. Red Rum's third Grand National win.

18. Stanley Matthews FA Cup Final performance in 1953.
19. Frankie Dettori's seven winners at Ascot in 1996.
20. Gordon Banks' save against Pele in the 1970 World Cup final.

SAARC Golf India, SL enter final

SPORTS REPORTER

Familiar foes India and Sri Lanka moved into the final of the Third SAARC Golf Championship at the Delhi Golf Course according to a e-mail received here yesterday.

In the two-day strokeplay contest the hosts finished with one-over 289 to top the table ahead of the Lankans who fired five-over 293.

Bangladesh occupied third spot with a tally of 326, while Bhutan at 333 and Nepal at 334 were placed fourth and fifth respectively.

Ashok Kumar took the individual honours for the second year running after finishing with a total of two-under 142. He carded a level-par 72 on the final day.

Today's matchplay will be preceded by the Friendship Trophy involving 120 amateur participants including some of the corporate world's leading members.

Anil doing fine

NEW DELHI, Reuters

Indian leg-spinner Anil Kumble said on Friday he had started rehabilitation exercises after undergoing shoulder surgery in South Africa last month.

"I am feeling much better. I am doing physiotherapy. I have to do daily exercises," Kumble told Reuters by phone from the southern city of Bangalore.

He said he would travel to Johannesburg again next month to consult shoulder specialist Mark Ferguson, who operated on him on January 17.

Kumble, India's second-highest Test wicket-taker with 276 victims, was ruled out of the Test series against Australia starting later this month following a shoulder injury largely attributed to overuse.

Kumble, who may be out of action for at least four months, has not played since withdrawing midway through a triangular one-day tournament in Sharjah last October.

He opted for surgery after rehabilitation exercises failed to solve the problem and he experienced severe pain when he tried to bowl in the nets.

Kumble, who played for English county Leicestershire last year, captured all 10 Pakistani second innings wickets in a Test in Delhi in February 1999 to equal the world record of England's Jim Laker.

Steve keeps distance

PERTH, AFP

Australian cricket captain Steve Waugh said Saturday he had tried to distance himself from investigations into allegations his twin brother Mark took bribes from an illegal Indian bookmaker.

"I am not really pushing in there trying to find out too much information myself — I have enough to worry about being Australian captain," he said as his team prepared for Sunday's Carlton series one-day clash with Zimbabwe at the WACA Ground.

"You have to distance yourself a little bit from it. I feel for Mark and it is a tough situation, but life has got to go on. Everyone has one or two problems in their life, and Mark has got to deal with that."

"I have got to deal with what I have got to deal with, and you just get on with life."

Asked if he believed Mark would be on the plane when the Australian team left on February 13 for a seven-week tour of India, Waugh said: "I would expect so, yes."

Mark Waugh is expected to be interviewed in Australia next week by International Cricket Council (ICC) and Australian Cricket Board (ACB) anti-corruption investigators.

They want to question him about evidence given in an Indian inquiry last October that he was paid 20,000 dollars US by illegal Indian bookmaker Mukesh Gupta for information during a 1993 tournament in Hong Kong.

Waugh has denied the allegations. The ACB presented him with an ultimatum, to co-operate with the inquiry or be axed from the Australian one-day team which has been playing in a one-day series against Zimbabwe and the West Indies.

This prompted Waugh to change his mind and agree, after all, to help.

It is believed Waugh will meet investigators in Sydney Tuesday, the day before Australia and the West Indies clash in the first final of the limited-overs series.

Steve Waugh said: "It's not really any of my business — it is Mark's business, and his lawyers' and the Board and the ICC investigators'. They are the ones who have the job to sort it out. It's not up to me to sort it out."



American Lindsay Davenport in action against Anna Kournikova of Russia at the Pan Pacific Open yesterday. She reached the final.

Martina hopes to have fun

Tennis

NEW YORK, AFP

Martina Navratilova's own personal legend's tour continues at the Brisbane Open next month, but the 44-year-old tennis great says her return to the WTA Tour is about having fun, not breaking records.

"I had such a blast last year that I wanted to come back for another year just for the fun of it," Navratilova told AFP.

"I'm not doing this out of boredom, because I have plenty of things to do," Navratilova added. "But I loved the response I received. I got very positive feedback from everyone. So I decided to continue. I take it as a bonus. It's like the cherry on the cake for me."

Navratilova, who retired in 1994, returned to action last year, playing doubles at the French Open, Wimbledon and US Open, as well as a few other WTA Tour events.

The former world number one, winner of a total of 19 Wimbledon crowns in singles, doubles and

mixed doubles, refuted the idea that she was returning to desperately chase Billie Jean King's all-time record of 20 overall Wimbledon titles.

"I'm not planning on breaking any record," said Navratilova, who won a record nine Wimbledon singles titles. "I'm doing this because I want to sit back and enjoy myself out there. If it happens, it happens."

Last year the Czech-born American played women's or mixed doubles in a total of seven tournaments with six partners.

She reached the quarter-finals in Madrid, Wimbledon and Tokyo. Her best result came at New Haven, Connecticut, when she made it to the semi-finals along side Katarina Srebotnik of Slovakia.

For the 2001 season, the left-handed serve-and-volleyer said she will play a dozen tournaments, pairing up with former number one Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario of Spain.

"I just figured there's a lot of pressure to play with me. Arantxa is a champion. I just thought she could handle it better," Navratilova said of her decision to team

up with the Spaniard.

They will open their season at the Ericsson in Miami in March, and will then play Amelia Island, Berlin, Rome, Roland Garros, Eastbourne and Wimbledon.

The few hard-court tune-up events leading to the US Open have yet to be determined, Navratilova said.

Navratilova admitted she had a hard time controlling her nerves during her matches last year and said she was annoyed she hasn't managed to play as well in matches as she has in practice.

"I wasn't playing as well as I wanted in the beginning," she said. "No matter how much you practice, nothing is going to replace match toughness. And I was lacking in that. But overall, I was happy."

The former US Fed Cup Captain also said this will be her very last year on the WTA Tour before retiring for good — probably.

"This should be the last year," she said, but couldn't resist adding: "But if I'm enjoying myself as much as last year, who knows what can happen."

Rusedski romps past Safin

Tennis

MILAN, AFP

Britain's Greg Rusedski added another scalp to his recent tally of high-profile victims with a straight sets defeat of Russian world number two Marat Safin at the Milan Indoors here Friday.

Rusedski, launching a comeback after a miserable run of form in recent seasons, blitzed Safin in the first set and fought back from a break down in the second to win 6-0, 7-6 (7/5) and reach the last four.

Rusedski has now beaten the world's top two players this year, having ousted Brazilian Gustavo Kuerten at the Australian Open.

Looking stronger and quicker about the court than his opponent, the US Open champion, Rusedski is crucially injury-free having fully recovered from the ankle injury which so blighted his 2000 season.



GREG RUSEDSKI

He stunned Safin in the first set with some breathtaking tennis, looking at ease on both sides with his formidable serve lethal.

But he made a slow start to the second and was broken in the third game as Safin upped a gear.

Yet he proved his hunger for victory by breaking back and forcing a tie-break.

That too looked to be going the way of the Russian as he broke early and went 2-0 up.

But four points in succession, including two breaks of serve, put the Briton back in the box seat.

He was broken back with Safin lucky to win the point thanks to a wicked net cord, but then broke back as Safin missed with a cross-court pass.

An ace down the middle sealed victory and Rusedski now goes on to face Frenchman Julien Boutter for a place in the final.

In the other semi-final an informal Yevgeny Kafelnikov will face Switzerland's Roger Federer.

Kafelnikov advanced to the last four with a confident 6-4, 6-3 win over Vladimir Volchokov, pounding his opponent all over the court on his way to victory.

Federer was made to work slightly harder in his quarterfinal, defeating Croatian Goran Ivanisevic 6-4, 6-4.

Debate over Euroleague

Football

AMSTERDAM, Internet

Leading soccer clubs from Europe's smaller nations said they were not optimistic that UEFA would produce a satisfactory alternative to their proposed Atlantic or Euroleague after a meeting on Friday.

Peter Fossen, the general manager of PSV Eindhoven, who co-ordinated Friday's meeting of most of the 13 clubs committed to the idea, said that the new league remained the most logical option for the clubs who are in danger of being sidelined because of the small commercial domestic markets they operate in.

"It's about the survival of our clubs in top football," said Fossen who added he did not expect anything "revolutionary" from UEFA.

He also said there was no reason to be optimistic about the outcome of next week's "workshop" meetings when Europe's top clubs meet at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland.

Fossen repeated on Friday what he told delegates at the Football Expo trade fair in Cannes earlier this week.

"What we have suggested is a logical step... but we don't expect much from UEFA."

The clubs envisage promotion from their league -- played on the weekend -- into the Champions' League -- played in midweek. There would also be relegation

back to the domestic league in the pyramid structure.

Fossen also said their proposals would boost the Champions League because it would include an extra three or four "big" clubs which are currently missing out.

In a brief statement, the clubs said they welcomed the fact UEFA appeared to recognise their grievances and were eager to hear its proposals. However, as a sign of growing impatience, the clubs said they would press ahead with their own ideas.

"Until a sufficient solution is agreed upon the clubs decided to continue their own investigations in order to find alternative solutions for the problems they suffer."

The clubs have come into conflict with UEFA over their proposal to form the new league which has the working titles of the "Atlantic" or "Euroleague."

The clubs, including former European champions Ajax Amsterdam, PSV Eindhoven, Feyenoord, Celtic and Benfica, say they need a greater share of the game's growing riches to compete.

Otherwise, they fear they will become Europe's also-rans as the big names in England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain dominate the Champions League and the UEFA Cup and with it the television and advertising revenues.

Representatives from most of the 13 interested clubs -- Ajax, PSV and Feyenoord from the Netherlands; Rangers and Celtic from Scotland; Benfica and Sporting from Portugal; Anderlecht and

Bruges from Belgium; IFK Gothenburg and AIK Stockholm from Sweden and Brondby and FC Copenhagen from Denmark -- met in Amsterdam on Friday ahead of UEFA club workshops next week.

In December, UEFA firmly rejected their initial "Euroleague" plans and issued instead a set of wide-sweeping guidelines, billed the 10 Commandments, that it said would form the basis of future club competition. The clubs complained they were too vague and had too long a timeframe.

Any move to create a separate league is likely to incur the wrath of European soccer's ruling body UEFA, which said a breakaway body would not be able to take part in the lucrative Champions' League.

UEFA opposes the idea and turned up the pressure on those clubs thinking of taking part on Friday.

"If they want to break away clearly they have the right to do that," UEFA spokesman Mike Lee said on Thursday.

"But they wouldn't obviously be eligible to play in our competitions."

Currently clubs qualify for the Champions League, Europe's premier club competition, on the basis of how they perform in their domestic leagues. The case of the Euroleague is also being considered by a number of MEPs from the Netherlands and Scotland who claim that UEFA's stance is an unfair one and have urged the European Commission to act in the case.

Hingis keeps her word

Tennis

TOKYO, AFP

World number one Martina Hingis lived up to her pre-match promise to beat Magdalena Maleeva for a place in the final against Lindsay Davenport at the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament on Saturday.

The Swiss top seed, champion here in 1997, 1999 and 2000, fended off an array of deep, fast and heavy strokes from the eighth-seeded Bulgarian to secure a 6-3, 1-6, 6-0 victory.

Davenport, who defeated Hingis to win the title in 1998, powered past Russian pin-up girl Anna Kournikova 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-0 in the second semi-final match.

"I played a lot of tennis in the last month. It's gonna be the last match of the long trip," Hingis said of her fifth straight appearance in the final here.

"I'm really happy to be in the final again. I'm gonna give it everything. I beat Lindsay in Sydney. It was a tough match, but I won, and hopefully I can do it again."

Davenport said: "On this fast court, you really have to go for your shots and go for winners against Martina. I have to go for my returns and try to take advantage over second serve."

"I think the court being very fast indoors slightly favours me, but she is so tough on every surface, so I just have to play my best."

Both Hingis and Davenport both lost the second set, but in different ways, with the Swiss already focusing on the final set after falling 0-3 down whereas the

American found Kournikova suddenly catching up with her.

The 20-year-old Hingis faced numerous break points, spread across all her service games except the fourth game of the third set, as Maleeva fired winners from the baseline, especially with an angled backhand shot.

"I started off slowly in the second set, I was three-love down and

then it was hard to come back," said Hingis, who had to stave off 10 break points out of a total of 15.

"I haven't played Maggie for a long time and I didn't know exactly what to expect. She was former number four in the world, she hit some amazing shots in the second set, I didn't let her in the first set.



World number one Martina Hingis of Switzerland hits a forehand during her Pan Pacific Open semifinal against Bulgaria's Magdalena Maleeva in Tokyo yesterday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Clues include: 1. Nose lengthener, 39 Nth degree, 4. Applaud area, for short, 12. Actress Thurman, 13. 'Mary' —, 14. Arm bone, 15. Fast beast, 17. Send forth, 18. In other circumstances, 19. Hole-making tool, 21. Whiz precursor, 22. French, 26. A hell of a guy?, 29. Plague, 30. Pitching stat, 31. Evangelist, 32. It'll get you moving, 33. Primary, 34. Zlich, 35. Make like new, 36. 15- usually, 37. Ice-cream purchase, 39 Nth degree, 40. Downsize, 41. Pucci or Estevez, 45. Blame taker, 48. 16th-century fleet, 50. Mrs. Shake- in spore, 51. Lolton, addlve, 52. Uno + uno, 53. Mr. Roboto, 54. Hit band, 54. Hit Broadway musical, 55. Time — Bottle, 23. Archie Bunker's creator, 24. Part of the eye, 25. Chaplin prop, 26. Medley component, 27. Opera song, 28. Exaggerated, 29. New TV network, 32. Sour condiment, 33. Chutzpah, 35. Reynard, 36. Burg House-ingredient, 38. Crenshaw, for one, 42. California city, 43. Part of the loop, 44. Greek mountain, 45. Sometimes it's guzzled, 46. Can. prov., 47. Whatever amount, 49. Pub order.

Cryptogram puzzle grid with letters and numbers. The solution is provided at the bottom: S X Z I J X V X C R Y H O Y H N I R C H O X J Z I J X E N J C H O X J E G X C J H N V X S N C J X E F X H N Y C G F Y e s t e r d a y ' s C r y p t o q u i p : P L A Y H U I . F I S H I R M A N G O O D - N A T U R E D L Y A S K S T H E M A G I C I A N . " P I C K A C O D . A N Y C O D ."

Today's Cryptogram Clue: J equals R. The Cryptogram is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.