

Home comfort for Aussie tourists

AFP, Melbourne

Australia's cricketers will get to see their wives and girlfriends during the three-month Ashes tour of England.

Australian Cricket Board spokesman Brian Murgatroyd said Thursday players away for 50 days or more qualified to have their spouses and children under 18 join them for two weeks, with airfares and accommodation paid.

"It's almost a reward for long service," he added.

Australia captain Steve Waugh welcomed the move.

"They're welcome to come any time they want and I think that's the way it should be," he said.

Australia play five Tests against England and a one-day international series against England and Pakistan. The players leave on May 26.

Meanwhile, Australia's Ashes cricket tourists can be guaranteed the best rates when they exchange their dollars for pounds in England next month after negotiating a deal with foreign exchange specialist Travellex.

A six-figure deal makes Travellex the exclusive sponsor of the ACB for the entire tour, which includes a triangular one-day series with England and Pakistan and a five-Test Ashes series against England.

India opt for

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partly after consistent showings in domestic cricket.

Off-spinner Harbhajan Singh, who fashioned India's win over Australia with 32 wickets, will be the team's frontline slow bowler along with leggie Sairaj Bahutule.

SQUAD (age, Tests in brackets):

Saurav Ganguly (captain — 28, 41), Rahul Dravid (vice-captain — 28, 43), Sadagopan Ramesh (25, 15), Shiv Das (23, 6), Sachin Tendulkar (28, 82), Venkatasai Laxman (26, 22), Hemang Badani (24, 0), Sameer Dighe (32, 1), Javagal Srinath (31, 50), Zaheer Khan (22, 4), Ajit Agarkar (23, 9), Debashish Mohanty (24, 2), Ashish Nehra (22, 1), Harbhajan Singh (20, 11), Sairaj Bahutule (28, 1).

Coach: John Wright; Manager: Chetan Chauhan; Physiotherapist: Andrew Leupus.

Raining

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hope for a result. England's last two Tests, against Zimbabwe and West Indies last year, lasted just four and three days respectively.

Pakistan play two Tests before taking part in a one-day triangular series also involving Australia, the side who beat them in England in the 1999 World Cup final. Australia will then take part in a five-match Ashes series.

WI pull

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and Carl Hooper falling in quick succession to all-rounder Justin Kemp.

South African captain Shaun Pollock was named man-of-the-series, an award for both the Test and one-day contests.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the seventh one-day international between West Indies and South Africa at Arno's Vale Wednesday.

SOUTH AFRICA

Gibbs c Collymore b Cuffy	1
Kirsten c Ganga b Collymore	6
McKenzie c Ganga b Cuffy	13
Ontong c Cuffy b Cuffy	2
Kallis c Lara b Samuels	69
Rhodes b McGarrrell	16
Boucher c McGarrrell b Samuels	25
Kemp not out	12
Pollock not out	7
Extras: (lb-6, w-3, nb-3)	12
Total: (For 7 wks in 50 overs) 163	
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-9, 3-14, 4-40, 5-79, 6-132, 7-150	
Did not bat: R Telemachus, M Ntini	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Cuffy	10	3	24	3
Collymore	9	0	37	1
Jeremy	6	0	19	0
McGarrell	10	0	26	1
Hooper	10	0	37	0
Samuels	5	0	14	2

WEST INDIES
Ganga run out 15
Gayle b Kallis 28
Lara c Gibbs b Kemp 18
Samuels not out 54
Hooper c Gibbs b Kemp 5
Chanderpaul not out 31
Extras: (lb-5, w-4, nb-4) 13
Total: (For 4 wks in 44.2 overs) 164
Fall of wickets: 1-40, 2-56, 3-92, 4-102
Did not bat: R Jacobs, N McGarrrell, C Cuffy, K Jeremy, C Collymore

Bowler O M R W

Pollock 8 3 17 0

Ntini 6 0 29 0

Telemachus 7 0 35 0

Kallis 8 0 29 1

Ontong 8 0 30 0

Kemp 6 1 16 2

Rhodes 1.2 0 3 0

Result: West Indies won by six wickets and South Africa won the 7-game series 5-2.

Man-of-the-match: Cameron Cuffy.

Man-of-the-series: Shaun Pollock.

Complainant captains

Cricket

REUTERS, Kingston

West Indies captain Carl Hooper remained philosophical following victory in the seventh and final one-day international against South Africa at Arno's Vale on Wednesday.



SHAUN POLLOCK... m-o-s

After a series during which his side was all too frequently on the receiving end of a brutal cricketing lesson from the visitors, the win was a minor consolation for the home team.

The West Indies won their second match of the seven-game series by six wickets, as they reached their victory target of 164 with five overs and four balls to spare, 20-year-old Marlon Samuels top-scoring with an unbeaten 54.

"We're under no illusions," Hooper said afterwards. "At the end of the day 5-2 was the series scoreline. It's good to win but I hope that we can learn to play like we did today on a more consistent basis."

"Today we showed that we can bat and bowl well and it's just a shame that we couldn't have put in more performances like this. If we had, we could certainly have won the one-day series."

"I wish we could put our finger on what makes us inconsistent. Today we looked the better side and our results would be a bit different if we could play like this a little more often," Hooper said.

South African captain Shaun Pollock had few complaints after seeing his side outplayed in the final game, but admitted his team were ready to go home.

"It was a disappointing end to the series — we would have liked to have gone out on a winning note," Pollock said. "But it was probably too much to ask of the guys at the end of a long tour."

"I thought (Cameron) Cuffy bowled really well up front and put us under pressure, and when you lose early wickets it's always hard to set a competitive score and that's what put us on the back foot."

The South African captain said he was also disappointed that the team were unable to give Jonny Rhodes something to celebrate in his 200th one-day international for South Africa.

"It was Jonny's 200th match and he's put in some serious effort for South Africa over the years so we wanted to get out there and put in a good performance for him as much as anything else. Unfortunately we didn't do it," Pollock said.

Reflecting on the performance of his side over the Test and one-



CARL HOOPER... WI skipper

day series, Hooper was more positive.

"I don't want to make any excuses but I thought we were very competitive in the Test series and should have won at least two of the games."

"In the one-dayers we were outplayed by a better and more disciplined side and I was disappointed with that. 4-3 would have been better than 5-2," Hooper said.

Mauresmo moves on

Tennis

AFP, Rome

In-form Amelie Mauresmo of France defeated Spain's Angeles Montolio 7-6 (9/7), 6-3 here Wednesday to book a place in the third round of the 1.2 million-dollar Tennis Masters Series tournament.

Mauresmo, the newly-crowned German Open champion, had a sluggish start at the Foro Italico and had to save two set points before winning the tie-break on her own first set point.

But the second set was a more one-sided affair and the fourth seed now can look forward to meeting unseeded Daniela Hantuchova of Slovakia in the third round.

Mauresmo admitted she was glad after her weekend exertions that she had not been taken to three sets.

"With this kind of match it can last three hours so I am happy I got through this one," she said.

Her fifth-seeded compatriot Nathalie Tauziat had earlier become the biggest of the four seeds

to fall on Wednesday ahead of the evening match between second-ranked American Jennifer Capriati and Hungary's unseeded Rita Kuti Kis.

Former Wimbledon finalist Tauziat fell to Joannette Kruger of South Africa who prevailed 5-7, 6-3, 6-4.

Asked what had defeated her Tauziat simply replied: "My head." She added: "I played better than I did in Berlin (at the German Open). I moved a bit better so at least I can continue to work in that direction."

Sixth-seeded Belgian Kim Clijsters was another second-round victim, falling to Switzerland's Emanuele Gagliardi who won 3-6, 6-2, 6-3.

The other seed to bite the dust on court was eighth-ranked Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria, eliminated by Italy's unseeded Francesca Schiavone who — roared on by the home fans — triumphed 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/1).

The home support was not enough, however, to prevent two more Italians from going out. Silvia Farina went down in straight sets to Leon Garcia, who won 7-6

(10/8), 6-2, while teenage wildcard Maria Elena Camerin was ousted by Russian Elena Likhovtseva whose 6-1, 6-4 triumph earned Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario breezed into the third round. Like all the top seeds given a first-round bye, Sanchez-Vicario has never won this tournament.

She next faces Russia's Lina Krasnoroutskaya who saw off Spain's Nuria Llagostera 6-2, 6-4.

Jelena Dokic, who recently ditched her Australian allegiance to play for Yugoslavia, was another seed to negotiate the second-round hurdle. Next up for the 14th-ranked youngster is a third-round meeting with the winner of Wednesday's evening match between Capriati and Kuti Kis.

Meghann Shaughnessy of the United States, ranked 13, withdrew with an injury round where she will play third seed Conchita Martinez of Spain, who won this title for four consecutive years between 1993 and 1996.

Russia's Nadia Petrova, first round conqueror over France's 10th-seed Mary Pierce, beat American Lilia Osterloh 7-5, 6-0. She next faces Schiavone.

Agassi, Safin sent packing

Tennis

AFP, Hamburg

The French Open preparations of Andre Agassi and Marat Safin dealt a blow Wednesday as both players crashed out of the 2.95 million-dollar Masters Series event here in the second round.

Agassi slid out to unseeded Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, who beat the US third seed 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, while Safin was lacklustre in the extreme as Argentine Gaston Gaudio sent him packing 6-0, 7-6 (7/0).

Both men were looking for strong showings here in the last big clay court event before Roland Garros gets underway later this month.

The pair of shock results means the Hamburg event has lost its top six seeds already — and for Agassi and Safin their preparations for the French Open lie in ruins.

Agassi said he should have won his two-and-a-half hour battle, having led 4-1 in the decider only to fade away inexplicably.

"I got a little anxious in the home stretch and forced it a little bit," he said.

"You work hard for two-and-a-quarter hours and then five minutes can lose you the match," said the 31-year-old from Las Vegas.

"There's not much I can do — I gave it my best shot. It's not frustrating, it's challenging."

Russian second seed Safin had to wait around for the afternoon torrential rain to clear as he was scheduled to play on court one while Agassi carried on against Santoro, benefitting from Centre Court's retractable roof.

Having been absent in spirit in the first set, Safin then worked harder in the second only for Gaudio, a 22-year-old from Buenos Aires, to swamp him in the tiebreak.

Earlier, Moroccan claycourt specialist Hicham Arazi proved to be the cat with nine lives as he reached the last 16, saving nine match points before beating German Tommy Haas in three sets.

Arazi, 27, saved five match points to force a second set tie-

break and then four more in the breaker itself before winning 2-6, 7-6 (10/8), 7-5.

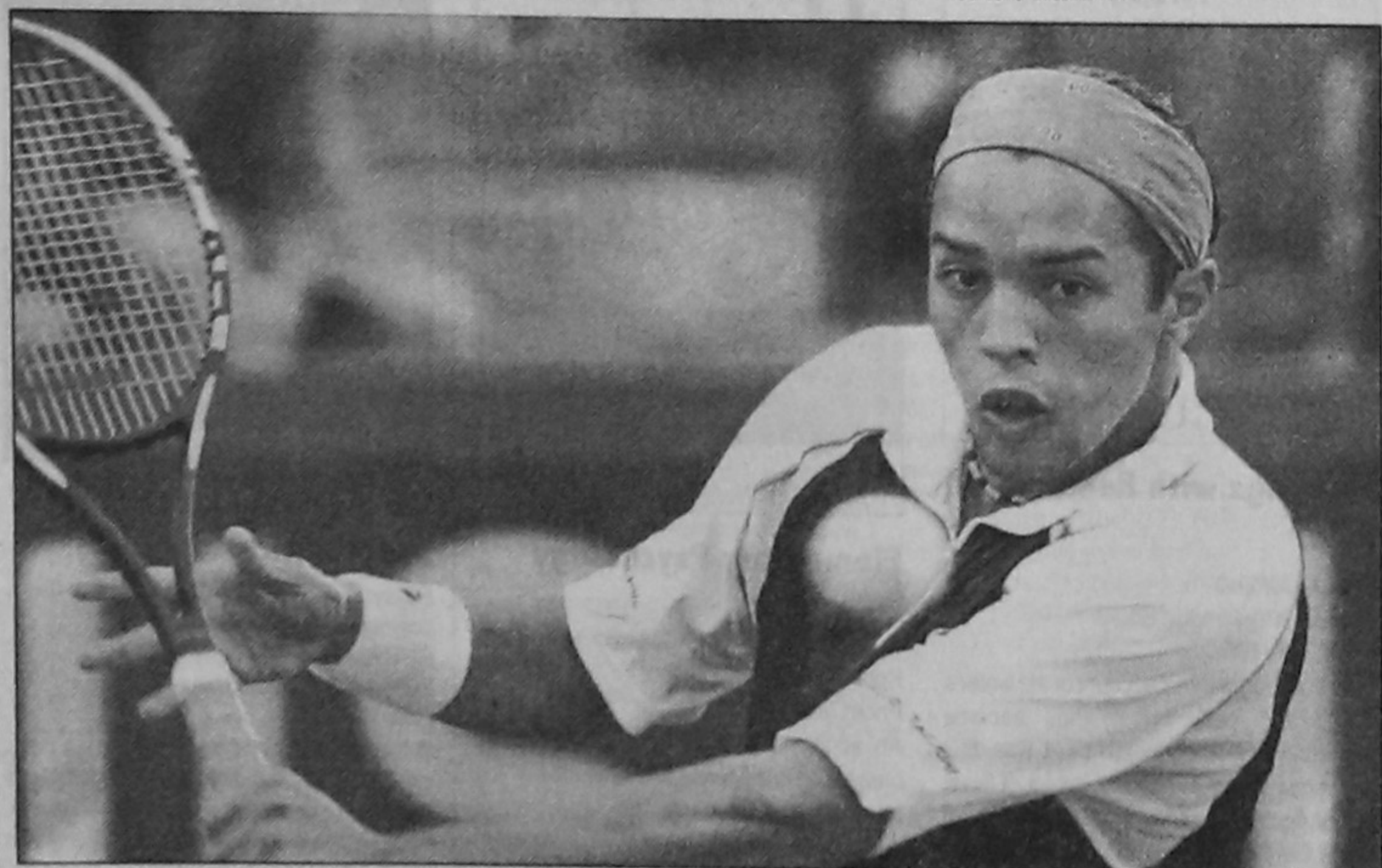
The Moroccan's reward is a match against Spaniard Alberto Martin in the next round — but 23-year-old Haas's undesired recompense was to be booed off after he double-faulted on Arazi's first match point.

"I like a fight," said Arazi, who reached the Monte Carlo final last month.

"You never know what can happen. I kept in there as I knew I had a chance."

Elsewhere, Albert Portas of Spain ousted fifth seed Magnus Norman of Sweden 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (9/7), US 14th seed Jan-Michael Gambill knocked out Marcelo Rios of Chile 6-3, 6-4 while Spanish eighth seed Juan Carlos Ferrero moved on after beating Israel's Harel Levy 7-6 (7/5), 6-3.

Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador sprang a minor surprise by defeating Spanish tenth seed Alex Corretja 6-4, 4-1 — although on the day the form book went right out of the window.



Moroccan Hicham Arazi plays a backhand return against Tommy Haas of Germany during their Masters Series tennis tournament encounter in Hamburg on May 16.

Malik aspires to meet Condon

REUTERS, Karachi

Former Pakistan captain Salim Malik, who is serving a life ban from cricket, is willing to meet anti-corruption chief Sir Paul Condon in an attempt to clear his name.

Condon, the head of the International Cricket Council (ICC) anti-corruption unit, is to arrive in Lahore on May 25 for a three-day visit, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Thursday.

Condon and two of his associates are coming at the special invitation of the PCB, but not as part of their investigation into cricket match-fixing.

However, Malik told from Lahore: "I will go the full distance to get my name cleared. I would be more than pleased to meet ICC investigators if asked to by the board."

Malik and former Test fast bowler Aftab Rehman were handed life bans by the PCB last year on the recommendation of Justice Malik Mohammad Qayyum, who investigated charges of corruption in Pakistani cricket.

Six other Pakistan Test players, including Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Saeed Anwar and Mushtaq Ahmed, were censured and fined by Qayyum. The five are currently touring England with the Pakistan team.

The PCB said Condon, former head of London's Metropolitan Police, had not asked to meet any players.

"If Condon wants to meet any player or someone who assisted Justice Qayyum in the Pakistan inquiry, we would be pleased to arrange a meeting. But so far, we have not received any request from the ICC," the PCB spokesman said.

The PCB opposed Condon's appointment as ICC's chief investigator last year, but softened its line in February during an ICC executive board meeting in Melbourne and invited Condon to visit Pakistan.

Sirajganj cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Bhangabari Boys Club recorded an 18-run victory over Jagrota Sangsad in the Bhasani Smriti cricket tournament at the local stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss Bhangabari batted first and scored 132 runs all out in 30 overs.

In reply, Jagrota were all out for 114 in 27.5 overs.

Three cheers

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Alaves pressure, when both Javi Moreno and Tomic were denied by fine saves from Sander Westerveld. Liverpool regained their two-goal lead.

Owen, looking to add to the eight goals he had scored in his previous four matches, broke free, only to be hauled down by Herrera after rounding the keeper and French referee Gilles Veissiere immediately pointed to the spot.

McAllister gave Herrera no chance with his penalty low to the keeper's left and Liverpool went in with a deserved 3-1 lead after 45 astonishing minutes.

One of the more astonishing results in Alaves' cup run was coming back from 3-1 down to draw 3-3 with Inter Milan in the fourth round — and they inflicted the same punishment on Liverpool in three incredible minutes at the start of the second half.

Javi Moreno, the leading scorer in Spain this season with 25 goals, pulled one back when he headed home a cross from Contra.

Two minutes later, he made it 3-3 with a cunning free-kick that hardly left the ground as it went under the Liverpool wall and bounced home inside the left-hand post, with Westerveld left stranded waiting for a high ball to his right.

Houllier replaced the ineffective Heskey with Robbie Fowler after 64 minutes and nine minutes later Fowler scored what looked like the winner with the goal of the night.

Collecting a superbly weighted through ball from McAllister, he took the ball across the area and drilled home a right-foot drive despite having four defenders and the keeper in front of him.

But there was still more to come and with Liverpool just two minutes from victory, Alaves equalised again with Jordi Cruyff heading home a corner from a metre out to make it 4-4.

Both sides had goals disallowed for offside in extra time, which started with Alaves having Magno dismissed after nine minutes.

But then with 116 minutes on the clock and penalties looking more and more likely, Liverpool were awarded another free-kick after Karmona was sent off for his second yellow card for hauling down Vladimir Smicer.

McAllister, voted as Man of the Match afterwards, sent in yet another piercing free-kick which skimmed off the head of Alaves defender Delfi Gell and past Herrera to cap a truly memorable European final.



England captain Nasser Hussain (R) and his Pakistan opposite number Waqar Younis hold the trophy of the current Test series at Lord's on Wednesday.

Waqar wanted Duncan

Cricket

AFP, London

Waqar Younis admitted Wednesday that he had once tried to put Duncan Fletcher, England's coach, into a similar job with the Pakistan side.

England have won four consecutive Test series under Fletcher and Waqar, who played under Fletcher at Glamorgan, said: "I asked him to come to Pakistan but at the time the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) were not interested."

"He (Fletcher) is a good man, a good coach, he co-ordinates well. He knows when to speak and when to listen," the fast bowler added at a Lord's press conference ahead of Thursday's first Test.

"You've got to give a guy time, a chance to prove himself. You can't say he will do this and that overnight. England did really well to give Duncan a lot of time and he's proved himself. He's the perfect man for the job."

Meanwhile Waqar admitted that he had yet to finalise his lineup.

Pakistan pin-up boy Shoaib Akhtar has been suffering from the after-effects of gastro-enteritis and Waqar said that the "Rawalpindi Express" and fellow quick Mohammad Sami were both bad fitness battles to overcome.

"With Shoaib I don't really

know yet and with Mohammad Sami it depends on his shin injury," said Waqar. "I'm not sure who will bat at three. Abdur Razaq can bat at three or six but I like having him in the middle."

"We depend more on our bowling so Razaq is a key man for to give us balance. Saeed Anwar and Saleem Elahi (the opening batsmen) are both in great form and Azhar Mahmood looks good but you can only play 11."

Waqar also suggested that only one out of slow bowlers Saqlain Mushtaq (off-spin) and Mushtaq Ahmed (leg-spin) would play. "Both have been bowling really well and it will be a difficult choice."

Meanwhile Waqar added that captaining Pakistan at Lord's, where he had been a member of two winning Test sides, was an inspiration.

"I'm very proud of myself that I'm here captaining Pakistan at Lord's, the best cricket ground in the world," he said.

"It will give me strength to know that I have done well here in the past. All we can do now is play hard cricket, do the best we can and leave it to God."

Meanwhile England captain Nasser Hussain said he was not flustered about the prospect of dropping down the order from three to number four.

"Nasser Hussain's focus is on what's best for England — I've

scored 207 against Australia batting at four. Michael Vaughan has the composure to bat at number three and it won't do Graham Thorpe down one place in English conditions. He's such a key player for us that we can do without him coming in at 10 for two."

England, who earlier in the day sent their only slow bowler in the squad, Robert Croft, back to play for his county Glamorgan, still have an injury worry over fast-bowling all-rounder Craig White.

"He's such a key player for us that we will give him an extra day and night."

Hussain added that White's fellow Yorkshire quick Matthew Hoggard was unlikely to play except in case of dire emergency because of a lack of match practice.

However, he added that he had no qualms about fielding two debutants in Yorkshire left-arm quick Ryan Sidebottom and Surrey batsman Ian Ward.

"Neither of them is 18, both are seasoned professionals. I faced Sidebottom in the nets and he is quicker than you think, he hits the bat hard."

The England captain added that neither side would be adversely affected by a lack of match practice: "The guys are fully prepared."

"They'll be up for it by the time they start walking through the Long Room here tomorrow."

John keen to end away drought

Cricket

REUTERS, Bangalore

India coach John Wright is determined to improve his team's poor record on foreign soil when they embark on the first of three consecutive tours later this month.

New Zealander Wright, whose side beat the all-conquering Australians 2-1 at home earlier this year, needs to make his players feel more comfortable on their travels to start getting better results.

"I think it is a great challenge and a big opportunity," he told this news agency. "I just think we will have to be very well organised and I'll try and make it easy for the players so that they feel at home."

Captain Saurav Ganguly and his squad will leave India on May 25 for a two-Test series in Zimbabwe, followed by trips to Sri Lanka and South Africa.



JOHN WRIGHT

Indian players have traditionally not been good tourists, with problems ranging from their temperament to dislike of foreign food, and their last major overseas Test series victory was achieved eight years ago in Sri Lanka.

"I'll try and keep the team together with a lot of things that we do on and off the field so you keep the team unity," said Wright, who took over as India's first foreign coach last November.

A low-key victory in a two-Test series against visiting Zimbabwe was a gentle introduction for Wright, but the dramatic comeback victory over Australia showed the team had been instilled with a new passion.

The series was clinched with a two-wicket win in the third Test in Madras, the batsmen keeping cool under intense pressure and showing great spirit to bounce back after losing the first Test in Bombay by 10 wickets.

"My favourite session was in the Madras Test when they played with a lot of determination when things were not going well," Wright said.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Wan	36 Round
5 Pigpen	37 Weep