

Shaun relieved it's over

REUTERS, Johannesburg

South African captain Shaun Pollock arrived back home on Saturday physically drained from a tour of the Caribbean he described as the most difficult of his career.

"This was only my second tour away as captain. There was a lot of hard work involved and a lot of deep thinking at times," Pollock told Reuters at Johannesburg International Airport.

"I would have to say that this was the most difficult tour I've ever been involved in."

The South Africans became the first team to win both a test and one-day international series in the Caribbean.

Pollock also achieved the individual honour of becoming the first South African to achieve all-rounders mark of 200 wickets and 2,000 runs in test cricket.

However, the tour was marred by a dope-smoking incident in an Antiguan hotel room involving five players and the team physiotherapist.

'Pakistan plan did not work'

AGENCIES, London

Pakistan coach Richard Pybus conceded England had the edge in the first Test after the touring team's tactic of bowling first — and leaving out top spinner Saqlain Mushtaq — backfired at Lord's.

Pybus said he was disappointed that his all-pace attack had failed to exploit seam-friendly conditions as England closed on 254 for four after being put in.

He said: "We thought it was a seamer's wicket and that it would do a little more."

"But England's combination of left and right-handers unsettled our line."

"It wasn't easy leaving out (off-spinner) Saqlain but we looked at the history of the way Lord's plays and made our decision. We picked the side and that's the one we've got."

He added: "I would think England have the edge but it only takes a couple of balls to turn things around."

Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis batted wicket-taking balls and Shaikh Akhtar got up some gas and got through some of the England batsmen with pure pace on a slow track, which was pleasing. He could have taken a couple of wickets.

"But England played well and you have got to give them credit."

Pybus, however, defended his side's decision to leave out Saqlain, arguably the world's best off-spinner.

The decision to leave Saqlain, who has taken 145 Test wickets at an average of 29.60, on the sidelines was all the more baffling given how he thrives in English conditions.

Army retain Hockey title

PRESS RELEASE, Dhaka

Bangladesh Army retained the title of the inter-service hockey championship which concluded at the Maulana Bhasani National Hockey Stadium yesterday.

The winners defeated Bangladesh Navy 1-0 in the final. The half-time ended goalless. Sergeant Humayun scored the match-winning minutes before the long whistle.

Sergeant Humayun of the Bangladesh Army was adjudged the best player-of-the-meet.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Jamal Uddin Ahmed witnessed the final as chief guest and later distributed the trophies.

England

FROM PAGE 13

Latif Stewart b Gough 18
Akram not out 19
Waqaar c Thorpe b Gough 0
Akhtar b Gough 0
Extras (h1, lb7, nb13) 21
Total: (All out in 57 overs) 203

Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-21, 3-37, 4-60, 5-116, 6-153, 7-167, 8-203, 9-203

Bowler O M R W
Gough 16 5 61 5
Caddick 17 3 52 4
Sidebottom 11 0 38 0
Cork 11 3 42 1
Trescothick 2 1 2 0

PAKISTAN: Second innings

Anwar c Thorpe b Caddick 8
Elahi c Thorpe b Caddick 12
Razzaq not out 43
Inzamam c Stewart b Cork 20
Youhana c Vaughan b Gough 6
Extras (lb 3, nb4) 7
Total: (For 4 wkt in 23 overs) 84

To bat: Younis Khan, Azhar Mahmood, Basit Latif, Wasim Akram, Waqar Younis, Shaikh Akhtar

Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-30, 3-67, 4-84

Bowling O M R W
Gough 6 1 29 1
Caddick 7 2 15 2
Sidebottom 5 2 15 0
Cork 4 1 10 1
Vaughan 1 0 12 0

What happened to it?

Cricket

INTERNET, India

Cricket needs one more inquiry to look into scandalous and total disappearance of the King inquiry.

It was convened almost a year ago, following captain Hansie Cronje's stunning admissions of serial wrongdoing to examine aspects of corruption in South African cricket. At first it was wildly successful. In little more than a fortnight from its opening, it heard tales of match-fixing and endemic corruption on a scale not previously thought imaginable, with many implications for the game around the world.

It led to Cronje's life ban and the suspension of Herschelle Gibbs and Henry Williams. It was the last of a series of catalysts that led the International Cricket Council to empower an anti-corruption unit a week later.

After nine sitting days, the King commission was adjourned to allow everyone to draw breath, or rather, to expel it. It has never been reconvened. Dates were set last October and December, but nothing happened.

Then it was announced in March that the inquiry had been closed down, reportedly prompting celebration among Cronje's lawyers. Not for the first time, legal victory had been moral defeat.

Judge Edwin King has submitted two interim reports, but the date for the expected handing down of his final report passed nearly three weeks ago with not so much as a "by your leave" from Cape Town. Malcolm Gray, then president-elect of the ICC, had visited Cape Town during the inquiry last year and been im-

pressed by King as an "iron fist in a velvet glove". Evidently, his hand has been tied behind his back.

This is not just Australian stickybeaking and self-righteousness. This week, the ICC's anti-corruption unit releases its first report, which is likely to implicate many umpires, officials and players around the world. Yet the inquiry was never reassembled.

It has even been suggested in South Africa that the King inquiry was killed off because it was about to embarrass some senior officials and players previously thought untainted. It has been suggested in London that the anti-corruption unit is anxious to question not only people implicated in the King inquiry, but people responsible for running it.

The sitting of the King inquiry was so long ago now that Gibbs has had time to serve his suspension, win back his place in the national team and land himself in hot water again. Perhaps he was smoking marijuana in the West Indies only to help out his impetuous mother again!

Nonetheless, the inquiry's business was far from finished. King was charged with the power to determine whether Cronje had been full and frank enough in his offerings to earn an indemnity from criminal prosecution. Cronje's standing before the law of his land is still not known. Plainly, the King Commission's work is not done.

It has been reliably reported that Cronje's lawyers are hoping that the delays, distractions and obfuscation will cause South Africa to become bored with Cronje and the whole match-fixing scandal. Perhaps South Africans will be worn down. But the ICC will not.

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McNamara in 1982.

"I lost my rhythm out there and once I did that it was hard to get back," the 20-year-old Adelaider conceded.

"I had my opportunities in the second set and didn't take them."

Portas' success, meanwhile, means that Sunday will be the 50th all-Spanish final on the men's Tour since 1990 and the third this year, all involving Ferrero.

"We know each other perfectly and Ferrero is playing unbelievably. It will be a tough match - but tomorrow is another day. I have come here with a lot of confidence," said Portas after seeing off Hewitt in a two-hour gruelling encounter which meant he claimed his third seeded victim.

Ferrero has beaten Portas in the pair's two previous meetings, including a straight sets mauling on the way to winning Estoril last month and will thus start red-hot favourite to lift his fifth title of the year.

But Portas, dubbed the Drop Shot Dragon because that manoeuvre is such a potent weapon

where to go. But Shamil Batohi, the inquiry's leader of evidence, said upon her return to Cape Town from New Delhi last September that she had exciting new information, not the least of it authenticated transcripts of the Indian police tapes that indicted Cronje in the first place. Yet the inquiry was never reassembled.

The legendary Pakistan all-rounder told BBC Five Live that he was shocked at the tourists' lack of preparation and their short schedule.

"They have come into this Test match underprepared and unacclimated," he said.

"It is the worst thing to happen to the team after having had just five days of cricket."

"It's no preparation for a side who will have found the conditions completely alien."

"The blame goes on the shoulders of the Pakistan cricket board. If I was the captain I would have refused to play in this Test series."

Imran went on to criticise that bit-part Pakistan seemed to be playing in England's international cricket's plans this summer.

"It's like a sideshow to the Ashes, no team would have accepted this."

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in his armoury, says he thinks Ferrero could fire in a best of five sets final.

"Tomorrow, I think I'm ready to beat him," said the 27-year-old, who has yet to win a Tour title.

However, going on Ferrero's recent performances Portas' armoury will have to be primed and ready.

Ferrero overpowered Costa after winning a 13-minute second game to break for 2-0 and despite an immediate rebreak he never looked back, completing the one-sided win in 1hr 13min with a punched forehand winner down the line.

Should Ferrero see off Portas he will land a place in the history books as he will join compatriot Albert Costa 6-1, 6-2 to romp into the final of the 2.95 million-dollar Hamburg Masters Series here Saturday.

Ferrero took his tour-leading winning streak to 16 matches, leaving him on the verge of a place in the history books as one of an elite band to win Rome and Hamburg in the same season - and the first to do so back to back.

The 21-year-old Davis Cup winner, seeded eight here, will now face surprise package and fellow Spaniard Albert Portas, a qualifier who shocked Australian seed Lleyton Hewitt 3-6, 7-6, 2.

Hewitt lost out after a bright start when he dropped serve at the start of the decider and never got back, snacking a backhand return into the net as he failed to become the first player from Down Under to reach the final here since Peter

Today I played unbelievably. I hit winners from all sides of the court," beamed Ferrero.

Spanish showdown

Tennis

AFP, Hamburg

Spanish claycourt star Juan Carlos Ferrero overwhelmed compatriot Albert Costa 6-1, 6-2 to romp into the final of the 2.95 million-dollar Hamburg Masters Series here Saturday.

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