

Vulnerable matches

AFP, London

Some matches, particularly insignificant one-day internationals, are particularly vulnerable to match-fixing, the ACU said in its report on Wednesday.

"The corrupters are more likely to target some matches rather than others," ACU chief Paul Condon said in the report. These include:

- * "Matches where little is at stake, other than pride. Typically the last match in a series which has already been won convincingly by a team and substantial odds are being offered against them being beaten by the weaker side."

- * "One-Day Internationals in tournaments where one of the sides playing has either already qualified for the next stage of the tournament or already been eliminated."

- * "Hansie Cronje (former South African captain accused of fixing) called these matches 'soft matches' and others have called them by the bridge term 'dead rubber' matches."

- * "Betting against form provides attractive odds and if the match is fixed, guarantees a handsome return for the corruptors."

- * "One-day international tournaments on neutral territory. We have received reports of some players treating these events with indifference and the opportunity to maximise the receipt of gifts or indulge in under-performance for betting purposes."

Sami's 2nd Test hopes dashed

REUTERS, Leicester

Injured Pakistan pace bowler Mohammad Sami was ruled out of the second Test against England on Wednesday, ending his tour almost before it had started.

"He's still struggling with the sore shin which kept him out of the first Test," team manager Yawar Saeed said.

"He will go to London for 10 days of treatment. It's better to have him here in England, it's the best place for him to be treated."

Pakistan, who lost the first of the two-Test series at Lord's by an innings and nine runs, take on England at Old Trafford in the second match starting on May 31.

A decision will be taken later whether to send the 20-year-old home following his treatment or retain him in the squad for a triangular one-day series also involving Australia next month.

Sami, who has played two Tests and four one-dayers, came to international attention in New Zealand in March when he took eight wickets on his debut in the first Test in Auckland, including a spell of five wickets for six runs.

He played in two warm-up games against British Universities and Kent and had been challenging for a place in the Test side when he was injured.

NB v'ball

UNB, Dhaka

Titans Club and Bangladesh Rifles maintained their all win records in the National Bank Premier Division Volleyball League beating their respective rivals at the volleyball court yesterday.

Titans kept their top slot in the points-table defeating Power Development Board (PDB) 3-0. Titans secured 18 points from six matches while PDB suffered their second defeat in four encounters.

Earlier, Bangladesh Rifles beat Dilkusha Sporting Club 3-1 in the day's first match. They collected 15 points from five matches while Dilkusha suffered second defeat in four matches.

Thursday's match: Water Development Board vs Bangladesh Police.

M'singh cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Al-Helal AC became unbeaten champions defeating Mukul Faj (Green) by seven wickets in the Beg Steel Premier Division cricket league at the local stadium yesterday.

Winning the toss, Mukul Faj batted first and scored 55 runs all out in 27.3 overs.

In reply, Al-Helal made 57 runs in 8.3 overs for three wickets.

BRIEF SCORES

MUKUL FOJ: 55 for all out in 27.3 overs (Sumon, 15, Atik 10; Rubel 3/3; Zakir, 3/4; Billu, 2/12).

AL-HELAL AC: 57 for three in 8.3 overs (Rubel, 26, Sumon, 18; Neutron 3/34).

ACB seeks

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"They need to be very careful to be sure they're not touched in any way by corruption," he said.

"If they are contacted by anyone then they need to report it to the team manager or the captain or someone else in authority and get it in writing as soon as possible."

ECB stands by Stewart

Cricket

INTERNET, London

Lord MacLaurin, the head of England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), has reiterated his support for Alec Stewart following the publication of Sir Paul Condon's report into match-fixing on Wednesday.

Stewart is to be formally interviewed in the near future by Sir Paul's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU).

But he has denied claims made by an Indian bookmaker that he was paid 5,000 pounds for providing match information during England's 1993 tour.

The ECB chairman told BBC that Stewart had no case to answer as far as the board was concerned.

"I spoke to Alec when these allegations came up, along with Tim Lamb and David Graveney, and he answered our questions absolutely clearly."

"He has said to us that he has had no involvement in this sort of thing at all."

"We had to pass this over to Sir Paul because it is an international matter. So Sir Paul has it now, but the ECB has cleared Alec completely."

Lord MacLaurin dismissed suggestions that the ECB was risking its own reputation by giving such unequivocal backing to Stewart before the allegations have been investigated by Sir Paul's team.

"I know Alec well and I asked him some very specific questions along with the chief executive and the chairman of selectors and he was absolutely categorical in denying any involvement in this sort of thing at all."

"I believe Alec Stewart, but as it was an international situation we had to refer it through to Sir Paul and Sir Paul is now dealing with it."

Stewart has been appointed to captain England in the second Test against Pakistan next week with regular skipper Nasser Hussain unavailable due to a broken thumb.

"I saw Lord Condon in the New Year and he asked me not to comment on anything, and that's how it will be," he said.

"But what I will say is what I said at the time when it first broke is that I'm happy to co-operate if and when asked by Lord Condon."

"I am going co-operate as I said back in November, if and when asked to do so."

The allegations against him first surfaced during England's tour of Pakistan last winter.

He was among a group of leading players, also including Brian Lara, Mark Waugh, Arjuna Ranatunga, Aravinda de Silva and Martin Crowe, named in a report by India's Central Bureau of Investigation.

In a public statement made at the time, Stewart admitted to being "totally shocked" when he learned that his name was one of those in the CBI's 162-page document.

He said he hoped that his reputation when he finished playing would be "a good one not just in England, but throughout the world."

Stewart's form with the bat suffered in Pakistan, where he made only 99 runs in the three Tests, with a top score of 29.

But he had put the matter behind them by the time England reached Sri Lanka for the second leg of their winter tour.

He has played 109 Tests and 140 one-day internationals and was awarded an MBE in 1998.

Lord MacLaurin, meanwhile, has repeated that any England player found guilty of involvement in match-fixing can expect a life ban.

The elements that allure

AFP, London

Reasons why cricketers are prone to falling in the trap of match-fixers, according to the report of the International Cricket Council's anti-corruption unit:

- * International cricketers are paid less than top soccer players, golfers, tennis players or Formula One drivers and are therefore more vulnerable to corrupt approaches.

- * During the last World Cup (in England in 1999) and other major events the cricketers received a low single figure percentage of the proceeds from the event.

- * Cricketers have little say or stake in the running of the sport and limited recognition of their representative bodies, where they exist.

- * Cricketers have relatively short and uncertain playing careers, often without contracts and some seek to supplement their official earnings with money from corrupt practices.

- * Some administrators either turn a blind eye or are themselves involved in malpractice.

- * Cricketers play a high number of one-day internationals and nothing is really at stake in terms of national pride or selection in some of these matches.

- * Cricketers can take money from potential corruptors in return for innocuous information and yet refuse to fix matches.

- * Whistle-blowing and informing on malpractice was ignored or penalised rather than encouraged.

- * There was no structure in place to receive allegations about corruption.

- * Cricketers were coerced into malpractice because of threats to them and their families.

- * It was just too easy.

Third Division Cricket BKSP win big

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protisthan (BKSP), Dilkusha Sporting Club, United Cricket Club and CCS Blues won their respective Third Division Cricket League matches at different city venues on Wednesday.

BKSP registered a huge 155-run win over Rayer Bazar Athletics Club at the Uttara Police Lines ground, Dilkusha Sporting Club recorded an eight-wicket win over Sangsad Plaza at the Mirpur Outer Stadium, United Cricket Club posted a nine-wicket win over Prochey Cricket Club at the Gulshan Youth Club ground while CCS Blues handed West Jatrabari Krira Chakra a three-wicket defeat at the City Club ground.

SCORES IN BRIEF
BKSP: 250 for 9 in 40 overs (Farid 81, Mushfiq 63, Shamsur 42, Kamal 5/30).
Rayer Bazar AC: 95 all out in 29.1 overs (Sumon 22, Nazmus 3/16, Sadat 3/15).
Result: BKSP won by 155 runs.

Sangsad Plaza: 110 all out in 31.5 overs (Mukta 42, Hafiz 20, Walid 3/20).
Dilkusha SC: 112 for 2 in 16.2 overs (Akhter 32 n.o., Tariq 28, Kala 26).
Result: Dilkusha SC won by eight wickets.

Prochey CC: 64 all out in 20.4 overs (Ripon 21 n.o., Rajat 6/11, Ratan 2/13).
United CC: 65 for 1 in 11.4 overs (Tanim 28, Nawab 15 n.o.).
Result: United SC won by nine wickets.

West Jatrabari KC: 116 all out in 40 overs (Sony 24, Sharif 18, Julon 4/16, Rajib 4/17).
CCS Blues: 121 for 7 in 34.5 overs (Anwar 41 n.o., Nadim 23, Rahman 3/16).
Result: CCS Blues won by three wickets.

CJKS Div I cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Mohammedan Sporting Club and City Corporation won their respective matches of the CJKS-Ispahani First Division Cricket League at different city venues yesterday.

Mohammedans got an easy nine-wicket victory over Kallol Sangha at the MA Aziz Stadium.

Batting first, Kallol scored 71 runs all out in 32 overs while Mohammedans reached the target for the loss of one-wicket in 14.3 overs.

In the other match of the day, City Corporation recorded an impressive 206-run victory over Abahani (Junior).

Abahani batted first and scored 284 for nine in the stipulated 45 overs with Harris scoring 86 and Russell 72.

In reply, Abahani (Junior) were bundled out for 78 in 22.3 overs.



Russian Marat Safin exults after beating American Pete Sampras in the World Team Cup encounter in Duesseldorf on May 22.

Russians prevail

Tennis

AFP, Duesseldorf

Russia claimed a surprise victory over the United States at the World Team Cup on Tuesday, while Argentina overcame France.

Although Russia are fielding the highest-ranked team in the competition, both Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Marat Safin have been struggling in recent weeks. But Kafelnikov outlasted Jan-Michael Gambill 6-4, 5-7, 6-2 and Safin edged Pete Sampras 7-6 (7/0), 7-5.

An early break of serve was enough to earn Kafelnikov the first set against Gambill, but the

American came forward more in the second set and held a point to lead 4-0 before the Russian slowed his momentum.

Kafelnikov broke back in the seventh game, before two fine service returns earned Gambill a break for 7-5 and a warning for Kafelnikov as he hit a ball out of the stadium.

But Gambill immediately put himself under pressure in the deciding set, dropping his serve on a double fault. He then struggled to hold in the third game before an impressive Kafelnikov broke again for 4-1 and went on to claim the match.

"It's a relief, no doubt about it," said Kafelnikov, who has won just two matches since mid-March. "I'll take any win right now against anybody. It's definitely a small step for me in the right direction."

Although he has proved himself on clay by winning the French Open, Kafelnikov recently appears to confidence on the surface.

"The clay has been a disaster for me the last three or four years," he said. "The last time I felt well on the clay was in '96 when I won the French Open."

"It hasn't been like that for a long time. You lose one or two matches, and basically the confidence is gone."

"The older you get, it's tougher to compete with the young guys because you do need to work a lot harder than on the other surfaces."

Sampras declared himself still on the right track, despite two alarming let-downs that allowed Safin to sneak his third win in five meetings with the former world number one.

Having recovered from 1-4 to reach a tiebreak in the first set, Sampras then dropped 15 of 16 points to lose the set and go down 2-0 in the second. And although he recovered from 1-3, he lost five straight points and his serve at 5-5.

"I was hitting the ball fine but missed a few backhands here and there," he said. "I was playing the way I wanted to play. I was playing aggressively, I was dictating."

"I just need to tighten up and not go for so much all the time. It's all fine-tuning from here. I feel I'm hitting the ball much better this

week than I did in Rome and Hamburg, so it's coming around."

Argentina recovered from losing the opening singles against France, eventually claiming victory in a tight doubles decider. Sebastian Grosjean dismissed Franco Squillari 6-1, 7-5, before Mariano Puerta levelled with a 6-3, 6-1 win over Arnaud Clement.

Nat'l Summer Games from today

UNB, Dhaka

The final phase of the National Summer Games for boys and girls of 12-16 years begins today (Thursday) at the Mohammadpur Physical Education College (MPEC) ground.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader will inaugurate the three-day competition organised by the National Sports Directorate.

A total of 282 participants including divisional champion football teams, 72 kabaddi players, 120 swimmers and 36 coaches will take part in the meet.

Football and kabaddi competition will be held at the MPEC ground while the swimming competitions at the Dhammondi Sultana Kamal Women's Sports Complex swimming pool.

ICC accepts criticism

REUTERS, London

International Cricket Council (ICC) president Malcolm Gray accepted on Wednesday criticism from his own Anti-Corruption Unit that the ICC had been slow to deal with the scourge of match-fixing.

"The ICC and all the national boards...were slow to react," Gray told the BBC. "They didn't realise how deep and wide this problem was. They didn't act strongly enough, or robustly enough or quickly enough."

Gray said the ICC would have loved to act more quickly.

"Our problem is it's a very large and complex and legalistic matter," he said. "We can't just have knee-jerk reactions."

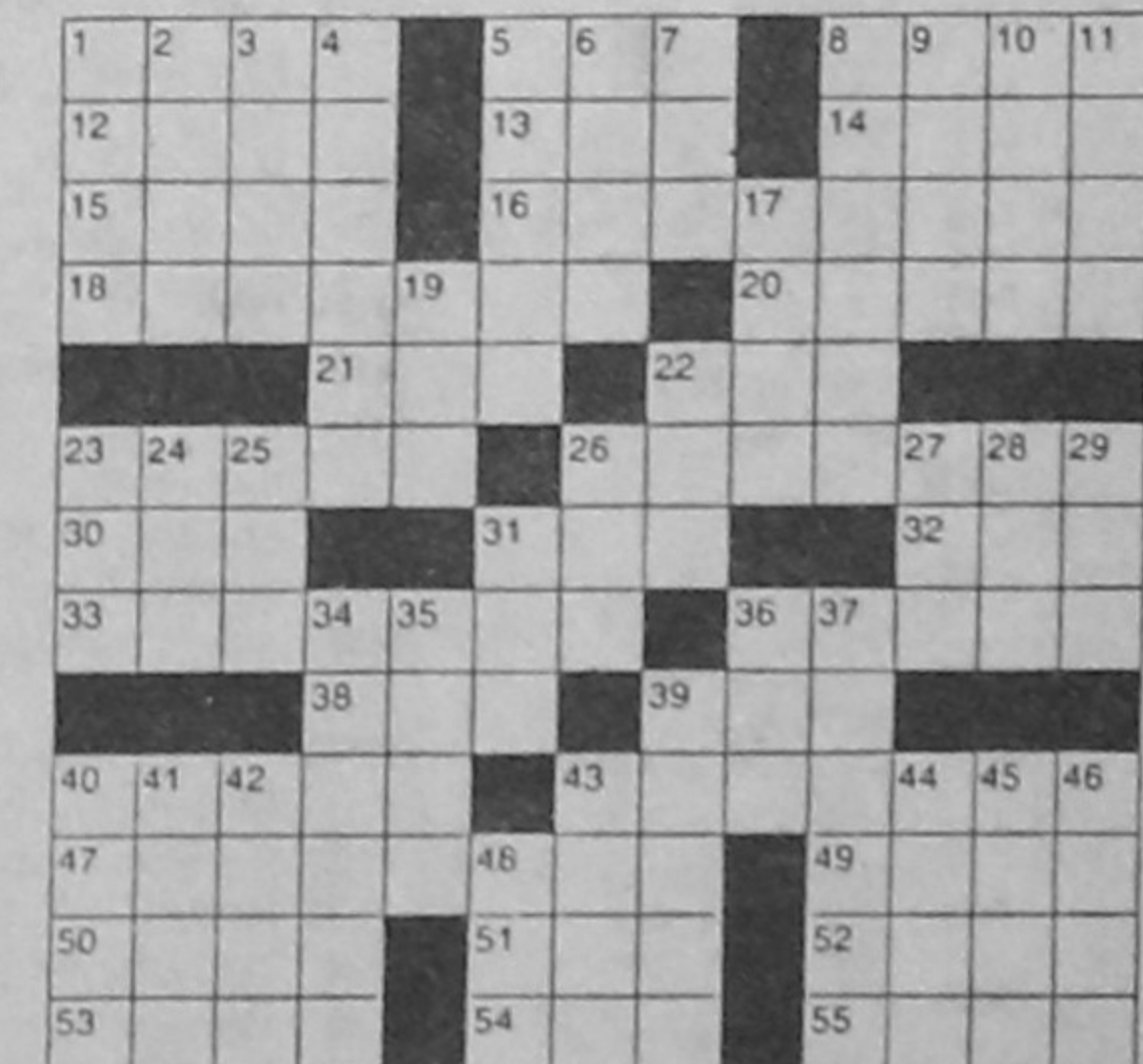
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Dis-courteous
5 Energy
8 Drudge
12 Particular
13 Blackjack component
14 Exercise discipline
15 Moist
16 Unlikely winner
18 Wide-ranging and hazardous
20 Takes live
21 Unclose, in verse
22 Lubricant
23 Butler's mate
26 Action movie
30 Remote club
32 Scoundrel
33 Glowworm
36 Browning output
38 Potentially will
39 Corn spike

DOWN
4 Evidence of innocence
43 Outfielder's concern
47 Waltz venue
49 Brainstorm
50 Velocipede
51 Exist
52 Mine car
53 Leading man
54 -do-lance
55 "Auld Lang -"
3 Show-room car
4 Caveat
5 Worth
6 PC symbol
7 Chaps
8 Yours
9 Ahs! truly mates
10 - Rhythm
11 Some muscles, for short
17 Cheshire countenance
19 Student's stat.
22 Chic no more
23 Vacationing
24 "Bali -"
25 Timetable abbr.
26 Festive
27 Lemieux milieu
28 Aries
29 Mag. staffers
31 Journalist Nellie
34 Sign
35 Equitable
36 Stipend
37 Satellite circuits
39 He's had bad hare days
40 Swedish quartet
41 "The best- schemes

Solution time: 27 mins.

FLAG DOW SPAT
LENO IDIA PIAGO
AVITS RESPTREID
TISSUE PARTIED
INCH LIT
RESPTTES TSPS
TRA TORUS AGE
MARCO RESPONSE
JOJO STAIR
CRANBIO ANALOG
RESPTIGHI NONE
ANSE LAN GOEN
WOOL EMS EMIT



CRYPTOQUIP

T I H B V ' Y R Y B H H L
Q U H G J Y K G Y G L I T H J V
Z R B K H J L G V B Y R U U Z R V T B

K R B Q G Y Q K I V - U R V H ?
Yesterday's Cryptquip: I BET THAT COMPOSERS MUST KEEP ALL THEIR MUSICAL INSPIRATIONS IN NOTE BOOKS.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: U equals L

The Cryptquip 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.