

Pollock not regretful

REUTERS, Sydney

South African cricket captain Shaun Pollock has defended his decision not to try and force a result in his team's drawn four match against New South Wales.

NSW captain Michael Bevan made a sporting declaration on Saturday when he was 17 runs short of a double-century but the South Africans failed to return the favour.

"It was difficult to get a result on that wicket - for us it was all about time in the middle," the South Africa captain explained.

"I didn't declare because we've got back-to-back Test matches against Australia so we didn't want to spend too much time out in the field."

NSW coach Steve Rixon was unimpressed by the South African attitude, saying they had no hope of ever beating Australia if they continued to use negative tactics.

"You've got to start building momentum somewhere and unfortunately I think they went about things the wrong way," Rixon said.

"I'm very disappointed actually. If I knew there was no game on, I would have batted out our last four yesterday."

Sourav lauds

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experience for the boys, more than what they can learn playing in the nets in England. It will hold them in good stead in the future."

Indian captain Sourav Ganguly conceded his team did not play well after the 10-wicket romp at Mohali, but denied they had become complacent.

"The main thing is that the batting was not consistent," said Ganguly, who himself has made just one half-century in his last 19 Test innings.

"This has been a tough year for me, but I plan to take the next few weeks off and sort out my batting worries."

Ganguly praised the visitors for fighting back strongly after losing the opening match in less than four days.

"The Englishmen came back well in the series. They played good cricket, both at Ahmedabad and here in Bangalore," Ganguly told reporters.

"I thought we played pretty well in Mohali but not at Ahmedabad and Bangalore. Our batting has to be worked on. We did not do well enough."

"But, in the last six or seven months, we have bowled pretty well. In this series Anil (Kumble), (Javagal) Srinath and Harbhajan (Singh) bowled well."

No more play

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England captain Nasser Hussain said he had been happy with the way his young team had improved over the last four weeks in India.

England's cricketers fly home for a Christmas break before returning to India in January for a one-day series.

BRIEF SCORES

ENGLAND: First innings 336 (Michael Vaughan 64, Mark Ramprakash 58, Javagal Srinath 4-73)

INDIA: First innings 238 (Sachin Tendulkar 90, Virender Sehwag 66; Matthew Hoggard 4-80, Andrew Flintoff 4-50).

ENGLAND: Second innings 33 for no loss. Result: Match drawn and India win the series 1-0.

Man-of-the-match: Andrew Flintoff. Man-of-the-series: Sachin Tendulkar.

S Africa held by NSW



REUTERS, Sydney

South Africa were held to a draw by New South Wales on Sunday in their final warm-up before the second Test against Australia starting in Melbourne on Wednesday.

When stumps were drawn half an hour early on the fourth and final day at the Sydney Cricket Ground, NSW were 135 for two in their second innings, 248 short of an unlikely victory target of 383.

Openers Brett Van Deinsen (61) and Greg Mail (54) both scored half-centuries for NSW in a first-wicket stand of 101 before falling to Lance Klusener shortly before the close.

Although there was little prospect of a result, South African captain Shaun Pollock declared his team's second innings at 269 for five before tea to give his fringe bowlers another chance to press for Test selection.

Most interest was centred on the performance of veteran paceman Allan Donald, who was overlooked for the first Test, which Australia won by 246 runs to take a 1-0 lead in the three-game series.

But Donald failed to make any inroads, conceding 27 runs from four expensive overs to finish the match without a single wicket.

South Africa's batsmen also failed to make the most of their final opportunity for match practice before the Melbourne Test, adding 157 runs for the loss of four wickets to the overnight 112 for one when Pollock declared.

Pollock finished unbeaten on 36 with first innings centurion Boeta Dippenaar on 31 after the tourists had lost four wickets for 11 runs before lunch.

NSW leg-spinner Stuart MacGill did the damage, once again showing up South Africa's deficiencies against quality slow bowling by adding four wickets to his first innings haul of five.

MacGill collected three of the last four wickets, including two in the final over before lunch, as the Proteas collapsed from 190 for one, to boost his chances of being named in the Australian team for the third Test at Sydney.

South Africa began the day well enough with Gary Kirsten and Jacques Rudolph adding 78 to the overnight total of 112 for one but then things suddenly fell apart.

MacGill made the breakthrough when he dismissed opener Kirsten for 88 before Mark Higgs removed Klusener for nought, the South African all-rounder's second duck of the match.

MacGill then dismissed Rudolph for 28 and Justin Ontong without scoring in the final over before lunch to reach the break with figures of four for 56.

Pollock and Rudolph added a quick 68 before the declaration allowed the South African bowlers a last chance to push for selection in the second Test but only Klusener made any impression.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard on the fourth and final day of the four-day tour match between New South Wales and South Africa at the Sydney Cricket Ground Sunday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 498 (H Gibbs 145, B Dippenaar 115; S MacGill 5-132)

NSW: First innings 385 for 6 declared (M Bevan 183 not out, G Mail 54; S Elworthy 3-57)

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings Kirsten c Clarke b MacGill 88 Gibbs lbw b MacGill 75 Rudolph c Haddin b MacGill 28 Klusener b Higgs 0

Ontong c Haddin b MacGill 0 Dippenaar not out 31 Pollock not out 36 Extras: (b-7, lb-4) 11 Total: (For 4 wkts decl in 80 overs) 269

Fall of wickets: 1-101, 2-190, 3-200, 4-200, 5-201

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Nash, Heath, Bradstreet, MacGill, Higgs.

NSW: Second innings Mail b Klusener 54 Van Deinsen c Kirsten b Klusener 61 Richards not out 12 Clarke not out 5 Extras: (nb-3) 3 Total: (For 2 wkts in 41 overs) 135

Fall of wickets: 1-101, 2-130

Table with columns: Bowler, O, M, R, W. Includes names like Donald, Pollock, Elworthy, Klusener, Henderson, Ontong, Rudolph.

Result: Match drawn.

Lankan boss sacks 'em all

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's new sports minister, Johnston Fernando, has sacked the governing bodies of cricket, athletics, volleyball and gymnastics, officials said Sunday.

Fernando asked the office bearers of the governing bodies to quit ahead of a revamping of the sports administration in the country, sports ministry officials said.

The quit notice saw the controversial Cricket Control Board members appointed in March lose their jobs.

The then sports minister Lakshman Kiriella appointed an interim panel to run the country's crisis-ridden Cricket Board after sacking elected office bearers headed by Thilanga Sumathipala.

The chairman of the outgoing cricket board, Vijaya Malalasekara, had been handpicked by President Chandrika Kumaratunga whose party was routed at the December 5 parliamentary elections.

The new government has promised to clean up sports governing bodies which have been accused of malpractice and corruption.

Victory Day Cup Golf

PRESS RELEASE, Dhaka

Faisal Jahangir and MH Yoon became men's and ladies champions respectively in the two-day Victory Day Cup Golf Tournament that ended at the Kurmitola Golf Club on Friday.

President of the club and Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Harun-Ar-Rashid inaugurated the competition, which was participated by 261 golfers.

Later, prizes were given away by Jute Minister Maj Hafiz Uddin Ahmed (ret'd) in the evening at the Club House.

OTHER RESULTS

Senior winner: Brig Gen Saleem Khan, Junior winner: Khandaker Rahat Tahsin Parash, Runner-up: Faisal Khan, Second runner-up: Arshi Haider, Third runner-up: Masud Ahmed, Front Nine winner: Farenze Georgi, Back Nine Winner: Shawkat uz Zaman, Nearest to Pin: Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Longest Drive: Rahib Bashar, Winner Nine Hole: Brig Gen M Masud Ali Khan, Runner-up Nine Hole: Group Captain M Mahbubul Huq, Hole in One (Hole No 15): S.Liaquat Ali.

Vancouver to bid for 2010 Winter Games

AFP, Toronto

The Canadian Olympic Association confirmed Friday that it will officially enter Vancouver as a candidate city for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in late January.

Applicant cities have until February 4, 2002 to declare their intention to participate in the 2010 bidding process.

"This will be the next step on a long journey that will end with the International Olympic Committee's vote for host city of the 2010 Olympic Winter Games in July 2003," COA president Michael Chambers said in a statement.

Making it Wright

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Wright's crowning glory came in February-March this year when India stunned world champions Australia 2-1 in a dramatic Test series at home.

But the stupendous achievement was overshadowed by India's defeats later in the year in Sri Lanka and South Africa and a 1-1 deadlock against Zimbabwe.

India may have won the latest home series against England, but critics suggested the inexperienced tourists played better than the hosts, dominating the last two Tests.

Olympic torch reaches White House

AFP, Washington

The Olympic torch relay arrived at the White House on Saturday where the runners who lost relatives in the September 11 terror attacks were saluted by President George W. Bush.

"I am honoured to be taking part in the torch relay for the 2002 Winter Olympics and I am proud the Olympic spirit is being welcomed in the United States this winter," the president said.

He made a point of praising those runners who have chosen to represent the victims of the attacks in Washington and New York as well as the emergency services.

"The story of each one is one of compassion and courage," added President Bush who reserved special praise for Liz Howell who lost her husband in the suicide attack on the Pentagon.

"Her participation in the relay illustrates the strength of families in the country after September 11."

"Liz, our prayers are with you during this holiday season."

The torch will now travel to Baltimore, Maryland, Wilmington, Delaware and Philadelphia.

The Torch Relay's turn through the northeast of the country will also include New York City, where the thousands of victims of the September 11 attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center will be remembered.

On Sunday, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani will carry the torch on its final leg in New York, ending in a celebration at Rockefeller Centre.

The flame is expected to reach Salt Lake City on February 7, the day before the Winter Games get underway.



US President George W Bush comforts Olympic torch runner Elizabeth Anderson Howell at the White House on December 22. Elizabeth lost her husband Brady in the September 11 attack on the Pentagon.

Scottish Premiership Celtic's first slip



AFP, Glasgow

Runaway Scottish Premier League leaders Celtic crashed to their first league defeat of the season Saturday, going down 2-0 at

Aberdeen.

A controversial second-half penalty, coolly converted by veteran Robbie Winters, and a horrendous howler by keeper Robert Douglas settled a hard-fought match at wintry Pittodrie.

The spot-kick was given against Celtic striker John Hartson, who

handled a bouncing ball when back helping out his defence.

Aberdeen even had centre-back Derek Whyte sent off four minutes from time but held out under a barrage of Celtic attacks.

And in injury-time, a harmless back-pass was miscontrolled by Douglas and Darren Mackie robbed him to roll the ball into an empty net.

Rangers kept their slim title hopes alive thanks to a 3-2 win at Ibrox over Dundee United, giving Alex McLeish his first win in charge of the club in his first home game.

The home side opened the scoring in the 21st minute. Georgian international striker Shota Arveladze collected Ronald de Boer's defence-splitting pass before smashing the ball low into the bottom corner of the net.

However, United fought back to level the scores eight minutes later, Steven Thompson tucking home the equalizer after good work from Jim Lauchlan.

But Rangers restored their lead a minute from half-time when Italian defender Lorenzo Amoroso rose high to head in Fernando Ricksen's cross.



French boxer Brahim Hasloum is declared the winner over Colombian Rodolpho Blanco in their bantamweight title bout in Orleans on December 22. Hasloum won the fight on points after six rounds.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution time of 28 mins.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with numbers 1-56 and a key for the substitution cipher.

CRYPTOQUIP HY MOTDVOR KOQO BHGHFE SVOI KLABW MQLPTPBI PO GOQI DQAQB VTGHFE VOTQSR LY RSLFO. Yesterday's Cryptoquip: UPON FINDING A SHORT CIRCUIT IN THE FLICKERING LAMP, I STOPPED MAKING LIGHT OF IT. Today's Cryptoquip clue: O equals E. The Cryptoquip 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.