

A One-Man Year!

Cricket

REUTERS, London

Cricket will remember 2001 as the Year of the One-Man Show. The previous 12 months had been all about The Team -- Australia -- and their transformation of Test cricket from five-day attrition to three-and-a-half day sprint. But 2001 stood out for breath-

Rahul Dravid played his part in a 376-run stand but it was Laxman who attacked to change the mood of both game and series.

His feat may also have changed the mood of world cricket, ending a run of 16 successive Australian victories.

If that was not enough, the deciding Test produced as grand and as unlikely an individual achievement.

Second-choice spinner Harbhajan Singh was better known at the time for a bad attitude and a

days had passed.

In Sri Lanka in November Lara, despite a niggling hamstring, begged to differ.

West Indies lost 3-0 but Lara still managed 688 runs at 114.66 per visit. In the final Test he became the first man in history to score a hundred and double hundred in a Test and still lose.

You don't get many more obvious one-man shows than that -- Andy Flower apart.

Zimbabwe are a below-average

As if cricket's match-fixing scandal were not enough, India and South Africa defied the world governing body in November by sacking International Cricket Council (ICC) match referee Mike Denness -- he angered the Indians by censuring six of their players -- and going ahead with a game stripped of official status. Denness, some Indians even suggested, was a racist.

Ironically, the ICC had only just pledged to give the sport a stronger

Rewind 2001

taking individualism.

Courtney Walsh set the tone in April.

He scattered Allan Donald's stumps in Kingston for a world-record 519th Test victim before the West Indian pace bowler's aching body finally gave to a halt.

Behind him, however, the spinners, with their short run-ups and fully functioning knee cartilages, were already gathering like vultures.

Shane Warne crossed the 400-mark in August as he claimed 31 wickets during Australia's 2001 Ashes cakewalk. Muttiah Muralitharan was in his ample slipstream after 24 wickets in the three-Test whitewash of West Indies.

The year's undoubted climax, though, came from a man previously labelled an underachiever.

All that changed in the second Test against Australia at Calcutta's Eden Gardens in March. When Vangipurappu Laxman approached the wicket on the third day, India were 52 for one in their second innings, needing 222 to avoid an innings defeat.

Laxman and his pock-marked bat departed 10-1/2 hours later, 281 runs in credit, as India became only the third team in history to win a Test after following on.



VANGIPURAPPU LAXMAN

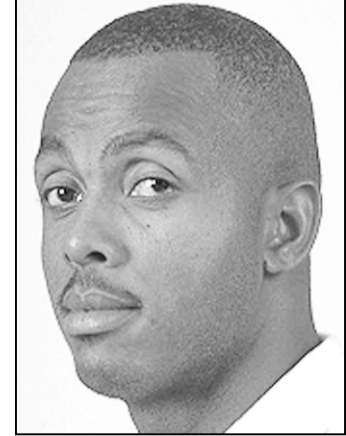
bad action.

Hugely impressive in the second Test, when he had become the first Indian to take a Test hat-trick, he was phenomenal in the third in Madras. Seven wickets in the first innings were followed by eight for 84 in 41.5 overs in the second.

"The Turbanator", as he was immediately nicknamed, added the perfect finish by hitting the winning runs to clinch a knife-edge series.

"It was the best and most demanding I have ever played in," Australia captain Steve Waugh said. "It really was quite amazing."

Brian Lara, of course, has a long association with the improbable. Most, though, suspected his best



COURTNEY WALSH

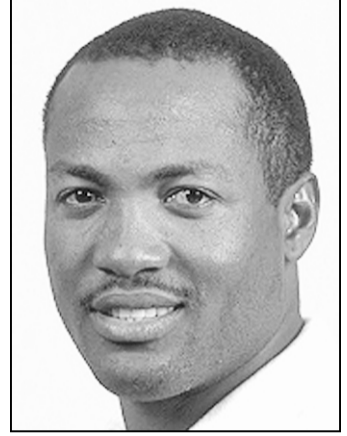
team who, the mirror image of Australia, managed to lose 16 one-day internationals in a row.

Wicketkeeper Flower, though, is among the world's best batsmen, with a Test average of 56. Half way through 2001 he hit 962 runs in 11 innings, at an average of 106.88.

He then topped that with centuries in each innings against South Africa, 142 and 199 not out, in Harare in September. And still Zimbabwe lost.

The year 2001 was ending perfectly, with Australia hosting South Africa and the top place in the World Test Championship at stake.

Off the field, though, things were less rosy.



BRIAN LARA

lead in routing out match-fixing, improving umpiring and refereeing and cracking down on player discipline.

Equally ironic, it was the ICC's former head, Indian board chief Jagmohan Dalmiya, who undermined those goals so publicly and so soon.

What Don Bradman, the greatest one-man show in cricket history, would have made of it is anybody's guess.

Bradman died in his Adelaide home in February, taking his memories, his 92 years and his Test average of 99.94 with him.

SA boss unhappy at team selection

AFP, Johannesburg

The South African sports ministry has questioned the national team selection for the second Test against Australia in Melbourne, including its dropping of black bowler Makhaya Ntini.

"What we are saying is that any player in the cricket team is there not because of their race but because of their playing abilities", Graham Abrahams, a spokesman for Sports Minister Ngconde Balfour Balfour told Thursday's Star newspaper.

"If the selectors feel that any player is not performing to his full potential, then it is their right to drop him, and we will not interfere with that. But what we are saying is that there should be fairness and equal opportunity, irrespective of who the player is."

"We accept Ntini's loss of form, but then the question that arises immediately is: what are the considerations for retaining (Lance) Klusener? Ntini is being replaced by (Allan) Donald, and there is no 100 per cent certainty about his fitness", Abrahams said.

"Let's have some consistency", he added.

The South African press had devoted long articles in the first stages of the tour to the selectors' dilemma about Ntini, prompting Balfour to vehemently deny there was any political pressure on cricket selectors to pick black players.

"I have never ever said anything to the South African selectors regarding the selection of teams to represent South Africa," the minister said last week.

"What I have said is: Be fair on potential players. Players should be picked on merit only."

"Ntini is in the South Africa team on merit. These stories must stop", he insisted.

Scottish Premier League Larsson saves Celtic

Football

AFP, Glasgow

Sweden international Henrik Larsson's last-gasp goal enabled 10-man Celtic to hold onto their 100 per cent home record with a thrilling 3-2 win over Livingston at Parkhead

Livingston had fought back twice to level the scores and looked like holding the leaders to a draw for the second time this season.

Lubomir Moravcik put Celtic ahead only to be clawed back by an Oscar Rubio header. Larsson then gave the home side a 2-1 lead but Francisco Quino canceled out his effort.

Celtic had Belgian defender Joos

a bit anxious and recently there has been a little extra pressure," he said.

"Sometimes, when there is tension from the crowd, players right to the crowd but it shouldn't be like that because we have no divine right to win a football game and that was proved at Aberdeen last week."

Celtic pounded the visitors in the early stages and they deservedly took the lead after 12 minutes when Moravcik fired a free-kick home from the edge of the Livingston penalty box.

Celtic were guilty of spurning a hatful of chances which were to prove costly when Livingston equalised nine minutes from half-time through a Rubio header from a freekick.

However, Livingston's joy was short-lived as Larsson restored Celtic's lead on 50 minutes, pouncing on a Paul Lambert cross to fire low past Culkain.

Livingston, the season's surprise package, refused to buckle and they restored parity for the second time eight minutes later when Quino picked up a rebound in the area and smashed it home.

Celtic's chances of snatching a win seemingly suffered a blow after 78 minutes when Valgaeren was sent off for a nasty challenge on substitute Nathan Lowndes.

But with time running out the hosts snatched all three points when Larsson met an Alan Thompson cross to tap home from two yards out.

Rangers meanwhile kept pace with a 3-0 drubbing of Hibernian in a match which turned controversial when two Hibs players were sent off in the dying minutes.

Craig Moore opened the scoring for Rangers after 15 minutes with a textbook header from a corner.

Although Hibernian, playing for the second time under former player-turned manager Franck Sauzee, battled to equalise the score was to remain unchanged until Rangers found an opening in the 85th minute.

Captain Barry Ferguson looked up from midfield and chipped the ball into the path of Norwegian Tore Andre Flo. The big striker made no mistake as he bore down on goal and easily slotted home Rangers' second.

The match then turned controversial after a shot hit the hand of outstretched Hibs player Ulrik Laursen.



HENRIK LARSSON

on Wednesday.

In Sunday's later match Rangers kept on the champions' trail with a dramatic 3-0 win at a Hibernian side playing their first match against former manager Alex McLeish who took over at Rangers last week.

Celtic sit top with 55 points and have a game in hand over Rangers who sit on 45 with Livingston third on 37.

Valgaeren dismissed with 12 minutes to go but held on to seal the win.

Manager Martin O'Neill, who last week watched as his side suffered their first league defeat of the season, at Aberdeen, said his player came through the test despite the apparent anxiousness of the home fans.

"Today the players did it for themselves. The crowd was getting

Bichel was lucky

Cricket

REUTERS, Melbourne

Pace bowler Andrew Bichel, who controversially removed South Africa's Jacques Kallis for 38 to help swing the second Test Australia's way, admitted later the dismissal had been a fortunate one for the home side.

"...from front on, it (the dismissal) looks pretty good, but from behind it looks not as good. But it was (umpire) Eddie's (Nicholls's) decision," Bichel, 31, told reporters.

"As far as I'm concerned, Eddie made the right decision. Obviously everyone's seen the replay, and very much, so I was lucky."

Kallis was given out caught behind by West Indies umpire Nicholls off Bichel's bowling in the 20th over on Thursday at 131 for four.

Television replays, however, indicated some doubt over whether Kallis had gloved the ball and Australia wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist initially showed no interest in the appeal, throwing the ball casually to slip.

Bichel was playing only his sixth Test and his first since taking 5-60 and 0-18 against West Indies in the Melbourne Test 12 months ago.

He had replaced the injured Jason Gillespie in the Australia 11 and, the next ball after dismissing Kallis, he took a stunning one-handed return catch to dismiss all-rounder Lance Klusener for a duck.

South Africa wicketkeeper Mark Boucher (43) survived the hat-trick ball before he was later caught at mid-off by Bichel.

"There's no doubt the (Klusener) caught and bowled ...(it) was more

of a defensive ploy than trying to catch it. It just managed to stick," Bichel said

Bichel's removal of Kallis ended a 72-run partnership with Neil McKenzie (67) for the fourth wicket

and the fast bowler finished the day with figures of 3-44 as South Africa were all out for 277.

Australia reached 126 without loss at the close of the second day's play.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia's Andy Bichel jumps for joy after claiming the wicket of Jacques Kallis on the Thursday.

Big guns stay away

FROM PAGE 13

Following is the list of 25 players who switched clubs on Thursday:

PLAYERS	FROM	TO
M Yamin	Azad SC	Mariners
Rahul Kanti Roy	Azad SC	Mariners
Ashiq Abedin	AKC	Mariners
Mazharul Islam	AKC	Mariners
Ainul Islam	MSC	Sonali Bank
Asif Hossain	S Bima	Wanderers
Asadullah	Uttara SC	Wanderers
Azizur Rahman	Young Star	Wanderers
Tanvirullah	Udity	S Bima
Rifatul Islam	Farashganj SC	Usha KC
Sabbir Haq	Farashganj SC	Sonali Bank
Shariful Alam	Farashganj SC	Usha KC
Entesham	AKC	Usha KC
Morselin	Bangladesh SC	Usha KC
Sarwar Hossain	Bangladesh SC	Usha KC
Hasan Rony	AKC	Usha KC
Ziauddin	Farashganj SC	Wari Club
Rashed Khan	Railway	Wari Club
Harunur Rashid	Farashganj SC	Wari Club
Moinuddin Zulu	Ajax SC	Wari Club
Rubel Ahmed	Victoria SC	Wari Club
Shahidul Islam	Bangladesh SC	Wari Club
Mozammel Haq	Victoria SC	S Bima
Abdul Wahed	Wari Club	Ajax SC
Proshanto Kumar	Bangladesh SC	Ajax SC

Advantage Australia

FROM PAGE 13

Kallis was given out caught behind by West Indies umpire Eddie Nicholls off the bowling of Bichel in the 20th over of the day at 131 for five.

However, television replays indicated some doubt over whether Kallis had gloved the ball and wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist had thrown the ball to slips rather than appealed.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close of the second day's play of the second cricket Test between Australia and South Africa at the Melbourne Cricket Ground Thursday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings (89 for 3 overnight)

Gibbs c Ponting b McGrath	14
Kirsten b McGrath	10
Dippenaar c Hayden b Lee	26
Kallis c Gilchrist b Bichel	38
McKenzie lbw b Lee	67
Klusener c and b Bichel	0
Boucher c Bichel b M Waugh	43
Pollock not out	42
Henderson run out (Bichel)	5
Donald c Ponting b Lee	0
Hayward c M Waugh b Bichel	14
Extras: (b-1, lb-10, nb-7)	18
Total: (All out in 103 overs)	277

Fall of wickets: 1-24, 2-36, 3-59, 4-131, 5-131, 6-198, 7-220, 8-225, 9-233

Bowler	O	M	R	W
McGrath	26	8	70	2
Lee	31	10	77	3

Bichel	19.5	6	44	3
Warne	19	3	56	0
M Waugh	8	1	19	1

AUSTRALIA: First innings
Langer not out
Hayden not out
Extras: (nb-4)
Total: (For no wkt in 32.1 overs)126
To bat: Ricky Ponting, Mark Waugh, Steve Waugh, Damien Martyn, Adam Gilchrist, Shane Warne, Brett Lee, Andy Bichel, Glenn McGrath.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Donald	9	0	34	0
Pollock	10	1	41	0
Hayward	5	0	33	0
Kallis	6	1	13	0
Henderson	2.1	0	5	0

Umpires: Eddie Nichols (West Indies) and Darrell Hair (Australia).

BDR V-Day kabadi champs

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) won the Victory Day kabadi championship defeating Bangladesh Army 20-14 in the final at the Kabadi ground here yesterday.

The first half of the match ended 8-8.

Secretary General of Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) Zafar Imam was present as the chief guest and distributed prizes.



PHOTO: STAR

Players and officials of the Bangladesh Rifles team who became Victory Day Kabadi champions.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

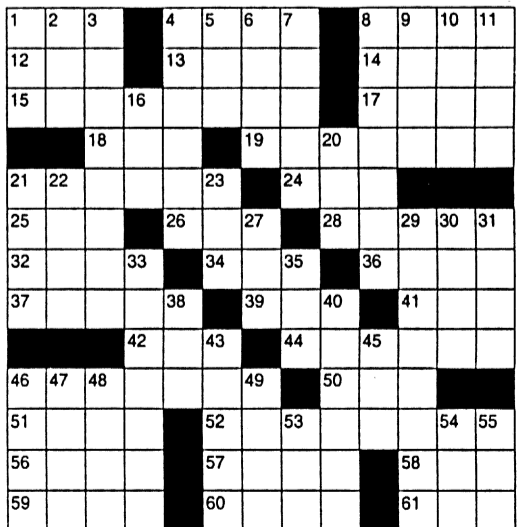
ACROSS
44 Strong
1 Espied
4 Bus rider
8 Maze
12 Swelled
13 Hertz rival
14 Mayberry
15 Group of U-boats
17 Actress
18 Dandy
19 Small falcon
21 Runner
24 Series of skirmishes
25 Actress
26 Pooch
28 Handled clumsily
32 Fender mark
34 Method
36 Bigfoot's cousin
37 Seeing red
39 Course norm
41 Caviar base
42 "A mouse!"

DOWN
61 Retainer
1 Wild a
22 Micro-
2 Long
3 Ply
3 Herr
27 Hiatus
4 Emulated
Teenage
5 Eventual
6 Ill
7 Distorted
8 Act as
9 Mimic
10 Fork
11 Cad
16 Naviga-
59 Reconn-
60 Command
20 Potential
20 Fido

Solution time: 27 mins.

ACROSS
32 FENDER
34 METHOD
36 BIGFOOT
37 SEEING
39 COURSE
41 CAVIAR
42 "A MOUSE!"

DOWN
61 RETAINER
1 WILD A
22 MICRO-
2 LONG
3 PLY
3 HERR
27 HIATUS
4 EMULATED
TEENAGE
5 EVENTUAL
6 ILL
7 DISTORTED
8 ACT AS
9 MIMIC
10 FORK
11 CAD
16 NAVIGATING
59 RECONNOITER
60 COMMAND
20 POTENTIAL
20 FIDO



8-16 CRYPTOQUIP

R E R E G T A P R K B L T R B , P
M W X T L E B R W X B U R B B U T
X J D E R B B U T N T W W T K
D T B G J M W X A R N T .

Yesterday's Cryptogram: A POSSIBLE TRUISM CONCERNING A WOUNDED LION MIGHT BE "WHEN IT PAINS, IT ROARS!"

Today's Cryptogram Clue: W equals N

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.