

Neutral umpires in Tests from April

AFP, Melbourne

The elite panel of eight umpires to officiate in Tests would be announced in February, the International Cricket Council said here Friday.

ICC chief executive Mal Speed also confirmed cricket's governing body would use two neutral umpires in all Test matches from April.

There had been reports in newspapers here Friday that the ICC was considering backing away from its plan which would result in local umpires never again officiating in a Test match in their countries.

Currently, one home umpire and one neutral umpire officiate in Test matches and while that may have eliminated allegations of bias, it has not necessarily improved the standard of umpiring.

Speed hopes the move to dramatically reduce the number of umpires officiating in international cricket will improve the standard of officiating.

"We will have (a panel of) eight umpires that will do 95 per cent of the Test matches," Speed said.

"Then we will have a supporting panel which will consist of two umpires from each (Test playing) country so in total there will be 28 umpires that will be eligible for international cricket.

"In contrast we had 74 umpires who stood in international matches last year and that's too many."

Umpires will be selected by Speed and chairman of the cricket playing committee, former India captain Sunil Gavaskar.

Kumar, Thilan

FROM PAGE 13

when he trapped Arnold leg-before in his first over with the second new ball, taken after 80 overs at 240-3. The Sri Lankan added just nine to his overnight total of four.

Gary Brent was finally rewarded for his accuracy when he had Sangakkara caught by Craig Wishart in the slips on the second attempt. It, however, required the third umpire's help to decide the catch had been taken cleanly. Streak finished with 3-113 and part-time off-spinner Trevor Gripper 2-91 on a Sri Lanka-dominated day.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the second day of the first Test between Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe at the Sinhalese Sports Club on Friday:

SRI LANKA: First innings (overnight 211-3)
Atapattu c A Flower b Streak 25
Jayasuriya c A Flower b Gripper 92
Sangakkara c Wishart b Brent 128
Jayawardene c Carlisle b Gripper 18
Arnold lbw b Streak 13
Tillakaratne c A Flower b Streak 96
Samaraweera not out 123
Vaas not out 74
Extras: (b-2, lb-4, w-3, nb-8) 17
Total: (For 6 wks dec in 161 overs) 586

Fall of wickets: 1-78, 2-150, 3-170, 4-249, 5-320, 6-450
Did not bat: B Fernando, N Zoysa, M Muralitharan

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Streak	34	5	113	3
Friend	27	5	102	0
Olonga	23	3	103	0
Brent	33	5	82	1
Gripper	22	3	91	2
G Flower	22	3	89	0

ZIMBABWE: First innings
Masakadza c Tillakaratne b Zoysa 3
Gripper not out 4
Carlisle not out 6
Extra: (nb-1) 1
Total: (For 1 wkt in 8 overs) 14
Fall of wicket: 1-3

To bat: Grant Flower, Andy Flower, Gavin Rennie, Craig Wishart, Heath Streak, Gary Brent, Travis Friend, Henry Olonga.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	3	1	6	0
Zoysa	3	2	2	1
Muralitharan	1	0	2	0
Jayasuriya	1	0	4	0

Umpires: Peter Manuel (Sri Lanka) and Riazuddin (Pakistan).



PHOTO: AFP

A NEAR MISS: Australia captain Steve Waugh (C) is on his way to the pavilion after an unlucky run out on the third day of the second Test against South Africa in Melbourne on Friday. He made 90.

Aussies assume authority



AFP, Melbourne

Matthew Hayden became Australia's greatest run-getter in a calendar year and skipper Steve Waugh was charged with dissent after being dismissed for 90 as Australia took the second Test against South Africa by the throat here Friday.

At stumps on the third day, Australia held a massive 210-run lead at 487 for nine with Adam Gilchrist on 30 and Glenn McGrath yet to score.

The Australians, emphatically stating their case as Test cricket's premier team, rammed home their advantage on a long and demoralising day in the field for the Proteas with the Test and series all but out of sight.

On the way to his 138, Hayden broke Bob Simpson's 37-year record of 1,381 runs for an Australian batsman in a calendar year. He swelled his annual tally to 1,388 runs at 66.09.

But while reinvigorated Hayden was toasting his sixth Test century, Waugh was cursing his eighth dismissal in the nervous nineties with his 28th Test century beckoning but whisked away by a laser-like throw by Gibbs.

There was some doubt whether South African wicketkeeper Mark Boucher had hit the stumps with his gloves and not the Gibbs' throw. There were suggestions that Hair may have erred in not consulting with the third umpire in the stands.

Waugh has something in com-

mon with Indian batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar, who last week was out for the same score against England in Bangalore as he was on the verge of his 28th Test hundred.

Australia, crushing 246-run winners in the first Adelaide Test, are heading for an equally-punishing victory over Shaun Pollock's out-gunned team, highlighting the yawning gap that exists between Australia and South Africa at the summit of Test cricket.

Resuming at 126 without loss in reply to South Africa's laboured 277, Hayden and Justin Langer strolled to their third double-century partnership in six weeks to put Australia in command from the outset.

Hayden and Langer had put on 202 when Langer hooked Donald next ball to Lance Klusener at square leg for 85.

The South Africans went to lunch buoyed by the minor success of Ricky Ponting's wicket for 22, after the Australian No.3 had been surprised by a brutish lifting delivery from Nantie Hayward that was gloved to Jacques Kallis at first slip.

Hayden was out in the first over after lunch when he holed out to Donald at long-on off spinner Claude Henderson ending his 290-minutes at the wicket for 17 boundaries and Mark Waugh followed 30 minutes before tea when bowled by Donald for 34.

The South Africans, toiling away for seven hours in the field, got some late joy when Martyn was caught in the slips by Kallis for 52, his ninth half-century, giving Pollock his first wicket of the innings.

Shane Warne, cheered to the wicket by his home state support-

ers, lasted just two balls before skying into the air to be pounced by Gary Kirsten to give Donald his third wicket.

Brett Lee flashed a cut to Neil McKenzie in the slips cordon for three off Hayward with four overs left and Andy Bichel was out for five next over, caught by Boucher off Pollock.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard after the third day of the second cricket Test between Australia and South Africa at the Melbourne Cricket Ground Friday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 277 (N McKenzie 67, M Boucher 43; A Bichel 3-44, B Lee 3-77)

AUSTRALIA: First innings (126-0 overnight)

Langer c Klusener b Donald	85
Hayden c Donald b Henderson	138
Ponting c Kallis b Hayward	22
M Waugh b Donald	34
S Waugh run out (Gibbs)	90
Martyn c Kallis b Pollock	52
Gilchrist not out	30
Warne c Kirsten b Donald	1
Lee c McKenzie b Hayward	3
Bichel c Boucher b Pollock	5
McGrath not out	0
Extras: (lb-17, w-1, nb-9)	27
Total: (For 9 wkts in 138 overs)487	
Fall of wickets: 1-202, 2-267, 3-267, 4-348, 5-429, 6-462, 7-463, 8-470, 9-475	
Bowler	O M R W
Donald	29 5 103 3
Pollock	30 2 84 2
Hayward	26 1 109 2
Kallis	17 3 55 0
Henderson	29 3 108 1
Klusener	7 1 11 0

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

US duo favourites



AFP, Perth

Americans Monica Seles and Jan-Michael Gambill are favourites to win the million dollars (\$500,000 US) Hopman Cup tennis mixed teams' tournament starting at Burswood Dome here this weekend.

The main draw of the 14-year-old event gets under way Sunday after Italy's Davide Sanguinetti and Francesca Schiavone clash with Greek pair Vasilis Mazarakis and Eleni Danilidou Saturday in a knock-out encounter to decide the eighth team in the competition.

Seles -- with nine Grand Slams under her belt -- and Gambill are top seeds, with Australia seeded second, despite the presence of world No 1 Lleyton Hewitt in the home country's line-up.

Hewitt will be partnered by relatively unknown 20-year-old Alicia Molik, ranked 47th in the world.

The in-form Seles, winner of her last three tournaments, and Gambill

have their sights on the top prize of 240,000 dollars (120,000 US) after being beaten in last year's final by Swiss pair Martina Hingis and Roger Federer.

Seles, 27, currently ranked eighth, has the chance to become the first player to win this tournament twice.

She and Goran Prpic clinched top honours for her native Yugoslavia in the 1990-91 event.

Gambill, 24, ranked 21st, is making his third appearance at the tournament.

The Americans have their first workout Monday when they come up against the unseeded French pair, Arnaud Clement and Virginie Razzano.

Clement, 24, is ranked 18th, while his 18-year-old partner is 72nd. She made the quarterfinals of this year's Australian and French Open titles and was also a beaten quarter finalist at Los Angeles.

Australia launch their campaign Sunday when they take on Switzerland's unseeded pair, Federer and Miroslava Vavrinec.

Twenty-year-old Federer, ranked 13th, promises to give Hewitt a keen

contest in the men's singles, while the 116th ranked Vavrinec, 23, should be no walkover for Molik.

Hewitt, the US Open champion, earned his No 1 ranking at the Tennis Masters' Cup in Sydney last month, and will view the eight-day Cup tournament as an ideal opportunity to tune up for next month's Australian Open in Melbourne.

The other two seeded nations are Spain (third), represented by 30-year-old veteran Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and 19-year-old Tommy Robredo, and Belgium (fourth), featuring Kim Clijsters -- Hewitt's long-time girlfriend -- and Xavier Malisse.

Sanchez Vicario, a former world No 1 and winner of four singles and 10 doubles grand slams, teamed with her brother, Emilio, to win this tournament in 1989-90. She is currently ranked 18th.

Robredo, 19, regarded as one of the most exciting players on the men's tour, is ranked 30th.

Clijsters, 18, became the first Belgian -- male or female -- to reach a grand slam final when she made the last two in the French Open this year. She is ranked No 5.

Malisse, 21, is ranked 35th. The seven teams assured of starts in the main draw are:

Group A
United States (Monica Seles, Jan-Michael Gambill), Belgium (Kim Clijsters, Xavier Malisse), France (Virginie Razzano, Arnaud Clement).

Group B
Australia (Alicia Molik, Lleyton Hewitt), Spain (Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, Tommy Robredo), Argentina (Paolo Suarez, Mariano Zabaleta), Switzerland (Miroslava Vavrinec, Roger Federer).

Teams playing off for place in main draw:

Italy (Francesco Schiavone, Davide Sanguinetti), Greece (Eleni Danilidou, Vasilis Mazarakis).

Dissent charge against Waugh

REUTERS/AFP, Melbourne

Australia captain Steve Waugh was called before a disciplinary hearing on Friday after he stood his ground despite being given out during the second Test against South Africa at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Waugh lingered at the crease after Australian umpire Darrell Hair had given him out run out for 90 as Australia reached 487 for nine in reply to South Africa's 277.

Eng to play one more ODI in India

AFP, Calcutta

England have agreed to play an additional sixth match in their upcoming one-day series in India, a top Indian cricket board official said Friday.

The extra match will be played in the eastern city of Cuttack.

"England has agreed to play an additional one-day international at Cuttack and the six-match series had to be rescheduled to minimise travelling," board president Jagmohan Dalmiya told a press conference.

Dalmiya said an agreement over future series had been signed by the two cricket boards.

"The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has realised the importance of playing an extra match and it will help strengthen cricketing relations between the two countries," he added.

The first one-dayer will be played at Calcutta on January 19, followed by matches at Cuttack (January 22), Madras (January 25), Kanpur (January 28), Delhi (January 31) and Bombay (February 3).

The matches at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay will be day-night affairs.

Dalmiya also announced that India would play four Tests and a triangular series, also featuring Sri Lanka, on their tour of England next year.

"England will compensate by participating in extra matches on their tour of India in 2006. They will either play four Tests and five one-dayers or three Tests and a tri-series," Dalmiya said.

"The arrangements for tours after 2006 will be discussed between the two boards at a later stage," Dalmiya said.

England, who returned home for Christmas after losing a three-Test series against India 1-0, will arrive back here on January 12 for the one-dayers.

Rajshahi cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Primary Sports Training Centre and Tiger Sporting Club won their respective matches of the seventh Bir Shrestha Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Jahangir Smriti Gold Cup cricket tournament at the local Railway playground yesterday.

In the first match of the day, Primary Sports defeated Friends Ideal Cricket School by 31 runs.

Winning the toss, Primary Sports batted first and collected 152 runs for nine wickets in the stipulated 25 overs.

In reply, Friends Ideal went all out making 131 runs in 23.5 overs.

In the second match of the day, Tiger Sporting Club defeated Mathpukur MM Club by seven wickets.

Winning the toss, Mathpukur batted first and collected 9.0 runs losing all the wickets in 19.5 overs.

In reply, Tiger reached the target losing three wickets in 16.4 overs.

No Bond in Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 13

declaring the innings. Left-armers Monjurul was again the pick of an average bowling attack, sending down 29 overs to take three for 99 -- his scalps useful ones in Horne, Fleming and Cairns.

The rest were barely up to New Zealand first-class standard, with paceman Mortaza hobbling in while Hasibul Hossain and Khaled Mahmud were too slow and too loose to cause any problems.

Robredo, 19, regarded as one of the most exciting players on the men's tour, is ranked 30th.

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England boring: Gavaskar



REUTERS, New Delhi

Former Indian skipper Sunil Gavaskar has slammed the England side which lost a three-Test series last week as the "most boring side to have played cricket in India".

Had the series, won 1-0 by the hosts, been played over five matches, Indian cricket would have lost a huge number of spectators, Gavaskar wrote in his column in the Hindustan Times daily on Thursday.

"At the end of the third Test, the overwhelming feeling was one of relief," he said, reviewing the series which ended on Sunday.

"Why is our board keen on having a five-Test series when England visit India next is beyond comprehension, for without the slightest doubt, they are the most unattractive and boring side to have played cricket in India," he said.

The Indian board wants England to play five Tests on their next Test tour in 2006 and a sixth one-dayer

during the January 22-February 3 Indian series for India to fulfil their commitment to play four Tests



SUNIL GAVASKAR

rather than three in England next year.

The leading batsman of the 1970's and '80s has been highly critical of Nasser Hussain's side after the second Ahmedabad Test, dominated by England, ended in a

tame draw.

India won the first Mohali Test by 10 wickets while the rain-hit final game in Bangalore also ended in a draw.

Gavaskar said all past home Test series against England have been dull affairs, barring 1993 when the hosts swept a three-Test series.

"Except the 1993 contest that India won 3-0, the others have been battles of attrition full of dull cricket from both sides - mainly initiated by England - and have been good only for people suffering from insomnia.

"It was another eminently forgettable series and we must thank our stars that the next England tour is in 2006," he added.

Gavaskar had some praise for Hussain after England dominated the second and third drawn games.

"That the Englishmen drew the two Tests and also looked in control for the better part, shows the work done on the mental side by Nasser Hussain."

Matthew heyday



AFP, Melbourne

Australian opening batsman Matthew Hayden is one player wishing this year won't end given his golden run with the bat.

The big Queensland left-hander scored his third hundred of the Australian summer and sixth overall Test ton during the third day of the second Test against South Africa here Friday.

On the way to his 138, Hayden broke Bob Simpson's 37-year record of 1,381 runs for an Australian batsman in a calendar year.

He took his annual tally to 1,388 runs at 66.09 and he still may have another innings to bat in this Test before the end of the year.

His 2001 aggregate leaves him equal third on the all-time list. Only West Indian Viv Richards (1,710 in 1976) and Indian Sunil Gavaskar (1,555 in 1979) have had bigger years.

Hayden is equal with Gundappa Viswanath of India, who made 1,388 in 1979.

"I knew when I went out that I needed 130 to get the record," said Hayden.

"The most pleasing part about that and a great deal of irony is that Bob Simpson has helped me enor-

mously in my cricket and he rang me in the change rooms tonight, which is something I will remember fondly.

"I have really enjoyed the whole of this summer, it's been one after



MATTHEW HAYDEN

another, it's very pleasing."

Hayden, whose career stalled for three years after scoring just 64 runs in five innings in South Africa in 1997, has now scored 1,916 runs at 45.61 in his 26th Test.

"Cricket is a very statistical game and I'm very proud of what I have achieved," he said.

"But the most pleasing thing is that I have trusted my game plan throughout the whole of the year and I've never deviated too far from

the way I've wanted to play my cricket."

The rejuvenated 30-year-old's season took off in India last March-April when he relished the spinning pitches to amass 549 runs at 109.80 with his highest Test score of 203 in the first innings of the third Chennai Test.

Hayden only scored one half-century in the Ashes series in England in mid-year, finishing the five Test series with 234 runs at 33.42, but, significantly, he formed a new opening batting partnership with Justin Langer in the final Test at The Oval.

The two left-handers put on 158 in their first time together and it's just rolled on from there.

They have totted up three double-century partnerships in the space of six weeks.

They have scored 899 runs together and are averaging 112.38 each time they open the innings, statistically far and away the best Australian opening pair in Test history.

The pair's nearest rivals are Jack Hobbs and Herbert Sutcliffe, who opened for England in 38 Test matches with an average of 87.81.

Langer and Hayden launched the Australian summer season with a 224-run stand against New Zealand in Brisbane followed by 223 in the next Test in Hobart.

AFC not

FROM PAGE 13

sional three-month period.

Sultan explained the AFC instruction was similar to one sent only two weeks ago.

"They again wish to know the facts for replacing an elected committee," he said adding that the BFF had earlier categorically stated that a president is always nominated by the government and is never been elected.

"The procedure is contained in the constitution of NSC."

The BFF chief said that he would discuss the issue with the regional body within the next couple of days.

Sultan also revealed that the letter only mentioned his appointment as president and nothing about the dissolution of the executive committee.

Kamal leaves

FROM PAGE 13

Besides, national midfielder Ishtiaque Ahmed Shipu and Ehsan Rana left Mohammedan for Abahani while two other upcoming players Habul and Shawkat joined Usha from Azad Sporting Club.

A total of 28 players took part in the transfers on Friday.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Billboards

4 "Please explain"

7 Freight

12 Promise

13 Simile

1