

# Long live Alec

Cricket

AFP, London

Few men have so willingly carried out as many roles for England as Alec Stewart.

So it is appropriate that the sometime opening batsman, captain, middle-order strokeplayer who is still his country's wicketkeeper will become England's most capped Test player of all time against India at Lord's on Thursday.

But the road to 119 Test appearances has not always run smoothly for the 39-year-old Surrey stalwart.

When he made his Test debut over 13 years ago against the West Indies in Jamaica, Stewart's father Micky was the England manager with many willing to say his selection owed more to nepotism than ability.

Then six years ago Stewart was dropped for the first Test against India before Nick Knight's hand injury saw him recalled for another five years as a first choice Test player.

Stewart's international obituaries were written up again when he made himself unavailable for the tour of India where his place behind the stumps was taken by James Foster.

But an arm injury sustained earlier in the season by Essex youngster Foster saw Stewart immediately recalled.

During the 1990s no other player scored as many Test runs and his current overall tally of 7,632 is testament to his effectiveness while his under-rated glove work has rarely let England down.

Like another ex-England captain Graham Gooch, whose record of 118 Test caps he is now on the verge of breaking, fitness has been the key to Stewart's longevity.

"They say age is just a number and there are 31 or 32-year-olds that I would take on in any fitness

test," Stewart said Tuesday. "I'm naturally athletic anyway which has helped me, but I've always believed that as long as you look after yourself and do the right things then you give yourself a chance of success."

"I leave nothing to chance with the preparation even before I get on to a cricket field," said Stewart. "The

been written off in the past and rightly so in some circumstances and it's been nice to be able to bounce back.

"Some people get intimidated but others seem to thrive on the full houses and the big occasions and fortunately I put myself in that category -- the more people watching and the bigger the occasion the



PHOTO: INTERNET

England vice-captain Alec Stewart fixes his England cap during a training session at the Finchley Cricket Ground in London on July 23 ahead of the first Test against India that begins at Lord's today. Stewart will become England's most capped cricketer of all time when he takes the field today.

way I train in the nets, the fielding drills and the fitness levels I try to achieve and maintain.

"I have a desire to be successful as an individual and for the team and never give up no matter what the situation and that has probably meant I've been able to play at this level for this length of time."

"At the same time I love being able to prove people wrong. I've

more I like to respond.

"I'll be trying to treat it like any other Test match, but when you see the list of people I've gone past like Gooch, David Gower, Geoff Boycott, Ian Botham and Colin Cowdrey they are England cricket legends and that's quite an achievement to have done that," Stewart said.

# Taylor thinks otherwise!

AFP, Sydney

Former Test captain Mark Taylor believes Steve and Mark Waugh may be using their non-selection in Australia's one-day teams as a means to continue their Test cricket careers.

While the famous cricketing twins have said they will still push for selection for next year's World Cup in South Africa despite not being named in recent Australia and Australia A teams, Taylor believes they would be more than content if they maintained their Test places.

"Maybe Steve and Mark are thinking that if they try and focus on getting themselves in every game including the one-dayers then they'll just be playing Test cricket," Taylor said here on Wednesday.

"It could well be the case -- it's just my guess. "It may be that they are worried if they say to themselves 'look, we'll sit back and play Test match cricket' that they might find their Test match form falls away and they find themselves under pressure for their Test spots as well."

"(Showing an interest in playing the one-day game) might be a way of keeping themselves upbeat, fit and at the age of 37 challenging the 27 years as well."

Taylor said the Waughes were in a vastly different position to when he lost his one-day spot in 1997 and went on to play almost another two years of Test cricket.

"My position was slightly different. I was dropped as an opening batsman and it was always going to be difficult for me to get back into that role," he said.

"For them to get back in, it will mean a change of position and a change in the way they play their cricket."

Taylor believed it would be difficult for both Waughes to get back into the national one-day team -- the likely avenue being for one of them to be "re-invented" as an all-rounder playing at number seven.

"It will depend a lot on (current all-rounder) Shane Watson. Hopefully the selectors will stick with him for a little while longer and give him an opportunity to flourish in that position," Taylor said. "But if he doesn't I think there may be an opportunity for one of them to slot into No.7."

# Novak, Moya move on

REUTERS, Sopot

Top-seeded Czech Jiri Novak battled from a set down to beat French qualifier Sebastien de Chaunac in the first round of the \$381,000 Polish Open.

Novak, ninth in the 2002 Champions race rankings, started slowly on the red clay courts in Sopot, losing the first set in a tiebreak, before regaining control and winning the second and third sets 6-2, 6-2.

In-form Spaniard Carlos Moya, fresh from claiming his second consecutive title in Croatia last week and seeded second in Sopot, joined Novak by swiftly beating Swede Andreas Vinciguerra 6-2, 6-1.

In other action, fourth seed Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia beat last year's runner-up Albert Portas of Spain 6-2, 6-3.

But seventh seed David Sanchez of Spain was bounced out by Argentine Franco Squillari 0-6, 6-4, 6-4.

In the women's event, Slovak fourth seed Martina Sucha beat Angeles Montolio 1-6, 7-6, 6-3 to reach the second round.

# Manchester dressed for the occasion



AFP, Manchester

You can tell in Manchester that the Commonwealth Games are imminent.

The baton arrives in the city after its worldwide journey on Wednesday and there is even the threat of the sun coming out.

The 17th staging of what has become known as "the friendly games" begins on Thursday with the opening ceremony at the City of Manchester Stadium.

After that, it will be ten days of continuous action in 17 sports, with the 5,650 competitors and officials making it the biggest Commonwealth Games ever and the biggest multi-sports event ever held in Britain.

Unusually, the games will start with the high-profile athletics events, featuring stars of the magnitude of Cathy Freeman, the Olympic 400 metre champion and the leading light of the Sydney games.

When the spotlight turns to the swimming, another Australian, Ian Thorpe - The Thorpedo - also has the potential to emerge as the games' outstanding individual.

If the third southern hemisphere giant to feature heavily in the advance promotion, the All Blacks' Jonah Lomu, has failed to win a place in the New Zealand Rugby Sevens squad, that will come as a relief to those who would have had to tackle him - until they reflect on how strong the Kiwis must have been in order to leave him out.

For the first time, the games will include elite disabled athletes

integrated in the main programme, with 200 of them competing in ten events and having their medals counted in the overall totals.

Manchester's setting does not quite match Sydney Harbour and the organisers might also have

behind the scenes."

The team running the games believe that sponsorship, corporate backing and ticket sales - the pricing policy has been aimed at making these "the affordable games" - will take them to their break-even figure.



PHOTO: AFP

Olympic 400m champion Cathy Freeman of Australia poses in front of cameras after her arrival at Manchester Airport on July 23 ahead of the Commonwealth Games which start today.

watched the spectacular production values of the 1998 Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur with some trepidation.

But the chairman of the Commonwealth Games Federation, Jamaica's Mike Fennell, says that Manchester will make up for that by being "more solidly organised

Providing new facilities has cost 170 million pounds (266 million dollars) paid for by the Britain's lottery - and the City of Manchester Stadium will be the new home for Manchester City Football Club from 2003.

The region also hopes for a long-term spin-off from the numbers of

visitors expected. Extra immigration staff have been drafted into Manchester International Airport to deal with processing the estimated 12,000 non-European Union passport-holders flying in.

The city's businesses are preparing to adapt to the needs of those visitors, as well as those from less far afield. City centre shops will stay open for late-night shopping, whilst bars, pubs and restaurants will also operate longer hours.

There are 54 countries in the Commonwealth qualified to take part in the games, but 72 competing nations - with the extras made up of the likes of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Jersey and Guernsey - independent entities for sporting purposes only - competing alongside countries of the vastness of Canada and the remoteness of the windswept Falkland Islands.

England will have the biggest team in the games with 655 and home advantage could make it a memorable games for them, although the record of the Commonwealth Games is that medals are carried off in some unexpected directions.

Manchester will be in no doubt that the city's biggest ever event has started when Manchester United and Wales' Ryan Giggs and City and England's Stuart Pearce are among the baton-carriers on the last leg of its journey.

And in a notoriously rainy city, the weatherman have promised a welcome bonus. The belated summer should arrive in the north-west by the end of this week, just in time for the sun to shine on Manchester's games.

# Ferrero sails, Rios fails

REUTERS, Kitzbuehel

Second seed Juan Carlos Ferrero advanced into the last sixteen of the Austrian Open while ninth seed Marcelo Rios made a swift exit.

Spain's Ferrero, gunning for his second title of the year after Monte Carlo, made heavy weather of seeing off Georgia's Irakli Labadze 6-4, 6-4 on the clay at this Tyrolean mountain resort.

Ferrero next plays unseeded Dutchman Martin Verkerk, who dispatched 14th seed Hicham Arazi of Morocco in the second round.

Chile's Rios, a winner of 18 tournaments to date, looked a pale shadow of his usual self in losing 7-5, 6-4 to French qualifier Jean-Rene Lisnard.

Defending champion Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador overcame a hesitant start to ease into the last 16 of the Austrian Open.

The fifth-seeded Lapentti, whose sole tournament win so far this year was also in Austria at St Poelten in May, outlasted Italy's Renzo Furlan 6-7, 6-2, 6-4 to stay on course for a possible semifinal clash with Spanish second seed Juan Carlos Ferrero.

"The match was very even in the first set, but then I lost my concentration. I served better in the second set and then played some of my best tennis," Lapentti said.

"The pressure is of course on me being the defending champion -- hopefully I'll make it all the way again," he added.

Joining him in the third round is Spain's Alex Corretja, who was hardly challenged in his second round match.

Eighth-seeded Corretja, a winner at this picturesque Tyrolean resort in 2000 but who fell at the first hurdle last year, beat Austrian wild card entrant Thomas Schiessling 6-3, 6-0.

# Unconcerned Pakistan

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan Tuesday said it was not worried by cricket chaos in Kenya, the likely venue for a tri-series with Australia next month, after the government dissolved the country's sporting body.

"We are not worried over reports coming from Kenya and we are dealing with Kenyan Cricket Association (KCA) and for us the tri-series is on," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) director Chishty Mujahid told this news agency.

The tri-series, rescheduled for August 29-September 7, appeared to be in serious doubt amid controversy surrounding the KCA which is responsible for managing cricket in Kenya.

Kenyan Sports Minister Francis Nyenze had advised the PCB, through the Pakistan High Commission in Nairobi, that it would not be possible to stage the event in Kenya since the KCA was no longer recognised by the government.

Nyenze dissolved the entire KCA executive in May and appointed a caretaker committee to run the sport for a period of three months. But, the KCA obtained a court injunction against the minister's intervention, claiming their eligibility as the rightly-elected body.

The move was supported by the sport's governing body, the International Cricket Council (ICC), which said it would abide by the court ruling.

"As the ICC accepts the Kenyan Cricket Association, we will also deal with them and have nothing to worry because they have confirmed participation and hosting of the event," Mujahid said.

Pakistan's one-day event, origi-

nally scheduled to be played in southern port city of Karachi, was thrown in trouble right from the word go.

Security fears in the wake of two bomb blasts in Karachi, the first on May 8 outside New Zealand team hotel, prompted Australia to demand the event be shifted to a neutral venue.

Then New Zealand last week pulled out saying it had other commitments.

Kenya agreed to replace New Zealand in a letter sent to PCB on Monday.

"I am going to Nairobi on August 5 and Australian cricket manager Steve Bernard will also come to inspect the facilities there and would hopefully be able to stage this tri-series," Mujahid said.

"We knew the problems were going on for some time in Kenyan cricket but we have assurances and that's why we are hopeful."

Mujahid also said he would suggest through Bernard Australian Cricket Board inspectors visit Pakistan ahead of a Test series scheduled in October this year.

"Pakistan is pressing to host the Test series on home grounds and for that we would invite ACB observers to come and ascertain the security," he said.

Bangladesh is also seen as a host option should Australia refuse to tour Pakistan.

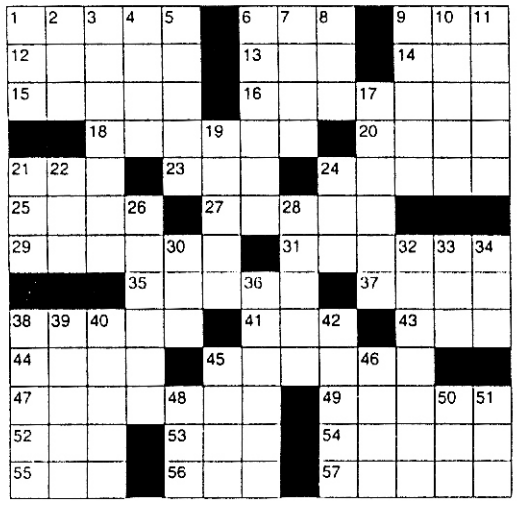
Cricket was badly hit in Pakistan in the wake of the US-led campaign in neighbouring Afghanistan and a series of attacks on foreigners here.

West Indies and Sri Lanka refused to tour Pakistan and Pakistan's home series against the West Indies had to be played in Sharjah in February-March this year.

# CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

**ACROSS**  
 1 Like mid-August, often  
 6 Victorious of rock  
 9 Cistern  
 12 Muscat native  
 13 Spoon-bender  
 14 Berlin's "What'll --?"  
 15 What moochers do  
 16 Wisconsin city  
 17 Pea, e.g.  
 20 Swamp  
 21 Ivy League  
 23 Unclose, in verse  
 24 Courmet  
 25 (LJ) son-in-law  
 27 Time  
 29 Take for granted  
 31 He cometh  
 35 Yule ditty  
 37 Erupt  
 38 Tasteless

**DOWN**  
 1 Ad -- committee  
 2 Ms.  
 3 Fill-in-the-blanks party  
 4 "Bus Stop" play-wright  
 5 Muralist  
 6 Period of development  
 7 "Dies --"  
 8 Accomplished  
 9 Stop in on  
 10 Worship  
 11 Photo-copier need  
 17 Pictures  
 19 Volta  
 21 Mound stat  
 22 -- Alamos  
 24 In the env.  
 26 Sag  
 28 Exxon  
 30 Has per-mission  
 32 Evita  
 33 "Hail, Caesar!"  
 34 Inexper-enced  
 36 Narcotic  
 38 Circus employee  
 39 Caffeine-affected  
 40 Put into cipher  
 42 Prepares leftovers  
 45 Faux pas?  
 46 Profit  
 48 Rascal  
 50 Surpass  
 51 Grads-to-be (Abbr.)



**CRYPTOQUIP**  
 C T D J H B H J U X M B H J I  
 U M H D J L R N T Z N T X N L X I R  
 Z M D J ' N J W N M H N H X W R .  
 H Z Q C Z K R N Z Q E U M Z J E Q K .

Yesterday's Cryptquip: I ENJOY MAKING POTTERY. BUT IT ISN'T A BIG PART OF MY LIFE. IT'S JUST KILN TIME.  
 Today's Cryptquip Clue: U equals F  
 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 Inal and error.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Australia Test captain Steve Waugh interacts with children of leprosy patients at a residential school at Barrackpore near Calcutta on July 23.

# Anna breaks Rd 1 jinx

Tennis

REUTERS, Palo Alto

Anna Kournikova ended a miserable run of form while Belgians Justine Henin and Kim Clijsters experienced mixed fortunes at the Bank of West Classic.

Russian Kournikova secured her first singles victory in nearly two months when she knocked out eighth seeded Israeli Anna Smashnova 6-3, 6-2 in the opening round.

Defending champion Clijsters, the fourth seed who has been nursing a shoulder injury this year, beat American Meilen Tu 7-5, 6-2 in a second round tie on Tuesday.

But her compatriot Henin, seeded sixth, suffered a hand injury in the deciding set and crashed out 6-3, 4-6, 6-1 to unseeded American Marissa Irvin in the first round.

Kournikova, who has not won three straight matches since February nor won a grand slam singles match this year, played her most consistent and intelligent match in some time, patiently waiting for opportunities to charge the net and show off her deft volleys.

"After losing so many matches row, it feels great," said Kournikova after ending her five-match losing streak and enjoying her first win over a top-20 player in six months.

In April, she hired well-respected coach Harold Solomon and, despite a slow start, Kournikova -- who missed much of last year with a stress fracture of the foot -- said she never doubted herself.

"Last week when we were practising in Miami and it was about 100 degrees and I couldn't hit a ball," the 21-year-old said.

"I didn't feel great (coming into the tournament) but I knew if I put in the work I would eventually play well."

like her usual, brutal self in dismissing Tu to reach the quarter-finals.

"My shoulder seems to be getting stronger," said Clijsters, who was watched by boyfriend and Wimbledon champion, Lleyton Hewitt.

"I played better than I have in the last few tournaments. I was more comfortable and aggressive. When I'm not aggressive enough, I have problems."

"I expect to get back to my old



PHOTO: INTERNET

Russian Anna Kournikova plays a forehand against Israeli Anna Smashnova at the Bank of the West Classic in Stanford on July 23.

Since beating Venus Williams in the final of Hamburg, 2001 French Open finalist Clijsters has also struggled, losing in the third round of this year's French Open and the second round at Wimbledon.

But the 19-year-old looked more

level. Henin slipped and stepped on her own finger while chasing a ball at 1-1 in third set and, despite receiving two injury timeouts, was unable to regain her composure against Irvin.

# Lord's to miss bowlers

FROM PAGE 13

Bombay to pursue a career in engineering, to start playing proper cricket.

But from there on such was his progress on the cricket field, aided by a spell at Australia great Dennis Lillee's pace bowling foundation in Madras, that in 1999-2000 he made his debut in the Ranji Trophy.

And aged 22 Zaheer gained his first Test cap, against Bangladesh. "No way could I have imagined at the age of 17 I would be playing for India just a few years later," said Zaheer who is now the most experienced fast bowler in the tour party with 16 caps.

He comes into the Test campaign on the back of some impressive one-day performances.

Zaheer's 14 wickets during India's victorious NatWest triangular series campaign were the most taken by any bowler in the three sides.

"I am happy with what I have done so far on this tour and feel it is a good foundation before the Test series," he said.

"I am getting used to the conditions and have confidence from the fact I have done well in the one-dayers."

Who plays alongside Zaheer at Lord's is less clear and will depend on whether India opt to include both leg-spinner Anil Kumble and off-spinner Harbhajan Singh in their starting eleven.

That leaves the likes of Zaheer's

fellow left-arter Ashish Nehra, medium-pace Ajit Agarkar and all-rounder Sanjay Bangar, who starred with both bat and ball in India's final warm-up match against Hampshire, to compete for the remaining bowling spots.

But India coach John Wright seems to have decided on his final line-up. "We've got a fair idea of the team we're playing at Lord's or the final 12 anyway," he told Tuesday's Daily Telegraph.

"We're not thinking about England's injuries -- we think they'll be tough opponents as we experienced in India," the former New Zealand batsman added.

India won that three Test series, concluded in December, 1-0.

But they have not won a Test campaign outside of the sub-continent since their 1986 series victory in England.

However, the home side's injury crisis appears to give Sourav Ganguly's side every chance of getting off to a winning start.

As well as being without three key strike bowlers, England will also have to do without injured opening batsman Marcus Trescothick, who broke his thumb fielding in a county match last week.

Trescothick has been one of England's most consistent performers in the last 12 months and his absence will see fellow left-hander Mark Butcher returning to the top of the order after a successful spell at number three.

Recalled Hampshire batsman John Crawley could fill the hole in the line-up.

But whatever else happens, the match will be a memorable occasion for veteran wicketkeeper Alec Stewart.

The 39-year-old Surrey stalwart's 119th Test will make him England's most capped player of all time, Stewart taking sole possession of the record he currently shares with another former Test captain, Graham Gooch.

England's bowlers performed heroically in twice dismissing the Sri Lankans in the third Test at Old Trafford where they wrapped up a 2-0 series win earlier this summer.

Skipper Nasser Hussain said after that match: "I don't think I've seen an England side play better."

But they may have to if Sachin Tendulkar and the rest of the powerful India top order are to be prevented from batting England out of the match.

**PROBABLE TEAMS**  
**ENGLAND:** Michael Vaughan, Mark Butcher, Nasser Hussain (captain), Graham Thorpe, John Crawley, Alec Stewart, Andrew Flintoff, Craig White, Dominic Cork, Ashley Giles, Simon Jones, Matthew Hoggard.

**INDIA:** Wasim Jaffer, Virender Sehwag, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly (captain), Venkatesai Laxman, Ajay Ratna, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Anil Kumble.