

QUIPS & QUOTES



AFP, Johannesburg
Who's saying what at the 2003 World Cup:

"It is no consolation that my name has been cleared. I can't understand what made the Australians do this. Can you imagine living the rest of my life branded a racist? I am not that kind of a person and will never be."

Pakistan wicket-keeper Rashid Latif denying he racially abused Australian counterpart Adam Gilchrist

"I wouldn't have raised the issue if I hadn't found it offensive. I was shocked by the comment I believe I heard yesterday. I and Latif had always had a good relationship both on and off the field. I hope there is no animosity between the two teams when they meet again."

Gilchrist in reply
"I know Andy Flower very well, and he has been a credit to the game by making the brave decision he did. He and Henry Olunga have proved to be great men by they have done."

England captain Nasser Hussain on the Zimbabwean duo's black armband protest

"You can't just throw someone out after you've picked the squad of 15. Allan's disappointed but he'll be back."

South African skipper Shaun Pollock defending veteran paceman Allan Donald who has been the target of criticism for some under-par performances

"During the off-season when the players go home, some to small towns, it is very difficult to judge whether a medicine is banned or not when you fall sick. You usually take what the doctor gives you. Most doctors will not know what drugs are banned for sportsmen."

Pakistan captain Waqar Younis on difficulties of staying clean

Nowhere to hide

FROM PAGE 13
day international and World Cup history to claim a hat-trick in the first over of an innings.

The absence of conviction and heart came to focus in the very first ball of the innings when Hannan went for an expansive drive only to see the ball sneak through the big gap between his bat and pad and hit the off-stump.

"This is terrible. Even the world's best batsman wouldn't have ventured to play such an outrageous shot", exclaimed Martine Johnson of The Daily Telegraph of England.

The dramatic collapse took only six odd minutes, but the humour that sparked off at the expense of Bangladesh's cricket continued for the rest of the day at the 6000-capacity venue.

Apart from the Lankans, the rapid Bangladeshi submission also made a security official posted at press box very happy but his reasons were different.

"What a relief to leave work before two (2pm)," he quipped while contemplating an early return home.

Turbanator

FROM PAGE 13
"I may bowl it on Saturday, but I wasn't confident enough to bowl it in our first match. I won't tell you what it is, you can see it on the TV."

Indian players are talking about themselves as being the Brazil of the tournament.

Like the side that won the soccer World Cup, the Indians are brilliant but erratic, capable of rising to the big occasion -- like Saturday's game at SuperSport Park.

"Obviously we have a very good team and the Australians know if we play to our potential we have a very good chance to win this one. Hopefully our batsmen get some runs, and we can do the rest," said Harbhajan.

"I'm bowling well, I'm confident. I've been bowling well for three years."
He has a long memory. So does Ponting, no doubt.

Tendulkar

FROM PAGE 13
each other's batting talents.
In a recent interview, Lara rates the Indian as "easily the best batsman in the world today." Tendulkar responded that Lara was being "modest and generous."

Beyond belief

FROM PAGE 13
viduals. The whole scenario has transformed in last two years."
Coach Wahidul Ghani pointed the blame at his Pakistani counterpart Mohsin Kamal.
"I don't think he (Kamal) has been able to guide the players properly otherwise they wouldn't be committing the same mistakes repeatedly."

He thought that the selectors should not have gambled by dropping too many senior players before naming the World Cup squad.
"Whenever the team loses early wickets there is nobody like an Akram Khan or Naimur Rahman to guide the other batsmen in the middle overs."

Give Zulu a chance

AFP, Johannesburg

Big-hitting South African Lance Klusener, man of the tournament at the last World Cup in 1999, said on Thursday that he was ready once again to set the cricket world alight.

After a disappointing run of form which had left many people questioning his place in the side, the 31-year-old answered critics in devastating style by smashing 57 which almost won the opening game against the West Indies at Newlands.

Klusener then took 4-16 to help his side to a 10-wicket win over Kenya at Potchefstroom.

"There's been pressure on me to perform, but it's just nice to be batting and bowling well again," he said.

"It's just a matter of going out there and believing in yourself."

"It goes through your mind what the problem is, but at the end of the day there's no change and there's no reason I can't get back to where I have been before with my game," said Klusener who was dropped from the Test and one-day sides after a run of poor form last year.

"I haven't really been taking wickets and then again I haven't really been scoring runs either so both performances at the World Cup in the two games so far have been very pleasing," the player told the Johannesburg Star newspaper.

Gunaratne out for 3 matches

REUTERS, Pietermaritzburg

Sri Lanka fast bowler Pulasthi Gunaratne was ruled out of his team's next three World Cup matches on Thursday after breaking a bone in his right index finger.

Sri Lanka manager Ajith Jayasekera, however, said that the right-artermer would be retained in the squad and is expected to be fit for the key Group B games against West Indies (February 28) and South Africa (March 3).

Gunaratne suffered the break while fielding in the opening 47-run win over New Zealand at Bloemfontein on Monday. He took two for 24 in five overs, removing Stephen Fleming and Craig McMillan.

The 29-year-old is likely to be replaced by either Prabhath Nissanka or Charitha Buddhika for Friday's game.

A late developer, Gunaratne played eight years of first-class cricket before making his international debut. He was no-balled for throwing in 1999-2000 in Sri Lanka but corrected his action.

Enqvist falters

AFP, Marseille

Defending champion Thomas Enqvist of Sweden fell at the first hurdle in the 500,000-dollar ATP tournament here on Tuesday, going out in straight sets to Dutchman Raemon Sluiter.

Enqvist, who also won the event in 1997 and 1998, lost the tight first round tie 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (8/6) against Sluiter.

Despite picking up the Marseille title, the 19th tournament win of his career, Enqvist failed to finish in the top 30 last season, finishing number 42 in the ATP Champions Race.

Sluiter's win makes up for his poor Davis Cup showing, where he lost his singles match to Roger Federer in straight sets as the Netherlands went down 3-2 to Switzerland.

In their first round action Tuesday, Slovak Dominik Hrbaty advanced past qualifier Hicham Arazi 6-1, 6-3, for his first win in three meetings with the Moroccan.

French qualifier Rodolphe Cadart came away a 6-4, 6-3 winner against Georgia's Irakli Labadze for a spot in the second round.



COME ON INDIA: College students in Bombay on February 11 show their support for the national cricket team before the start of their World Cup campaign. India's opening match was against Holland the next day.

Eng's belated opener



REUTERS, Cape Town

After all the worry and angst over whether to play in strife-torn Zimbabwe, England will belatedly launch their World Cup campaign on Sunday when they take on tournament minnows Netherlands in East London.

England's refusal to travel to Harare for their scheduled Group A match against Zimbabwe on Thursday means they are the only team in the tournament yet to play.

A session with the team's sports psychologist in Cape Town on Thursday was intended to switch their attention back to the cricket.

The match at Buffalo Park should at least provide England with a gentle Cup opener, offering them a chance to display the unity that captain Nasser Hussain believes has been forged over the recent difficult days.

Two warm-up victories against

South African provincial sides suggested England were in good shape following their arrival in South Africa from a disappointing tour to Australia.

That was quickly overshadowed, however, by the lengthy battle of wills between the International Cricket Council (ICC), which wanted the Harare fixture played, and the England and Wales Cricket Board, which feared for its players' safety in Zimbabwe.

The ongoing Zimbabwe issue has clearly had a draining effect on the players and all rounder Craig White's on-going injury problem has complicated the naming of England's likely line-up against the Netherlands.

White is still facing the threat of being cut from the squad but, with England confident of opening wins against the Netherlands and Namibia, he has been given extra time to recover from the side strain he sustained during the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

England have trained just three times since their warm-up victory

over provincial side Border but, with the majority of the squad having left home on October 14, rustiness should not be an issue on Sunday.

"We are getting to the stage now where we are thinking about the World Cup," said left-arm spinner Ashley Giles. "At the opening ceremony, it was all going off and very enjoyable but we had other things on our minds."

"The first game started the following day but, for us, it didn't feel as if the World Cup had got underway. Whatever happens over Zimbabwe is not in our hands now and we are working towards beating Netherlands and Namibia."

"We have to win every game. We have been through tough times and there have been some emotional meetings which, if anything, will have brought us closer together."

The Netherlands have enjoyed some unlikely success against England elevens in the past, beating an England side featuring Hussain in Amsterdam in 1989.

Trick up SA's sleeve



REUTERS, Johannesburg

New Zealand got their World Cup campaign back on track with victory over West Indies on Thursday, but their celebrations will have been tempered by the knowledge of what lies ahead.

Put simply, the Kiwis have a shocking recent record in South Africa, their next opponents at the Wanderers on Sunday.

They have never won a one-day international in the country, and on their last tour in 2000-01 they were crushed 5-0 in a series that exposed their psychological fragility against the South Africans.

Until the mid-1990s, South Africa's batsmen battled to adapt to New Zealand's traditional array of slow medium pacers and were regularly undone in the search of quick runs.

That all changed with the arrival of Bob Woolmer as coach in 1995, the Englishman successfully teaching his batsmen to work the ball around for singles as often as possible. The almost immediate result was bigger totals and better results against tricky sides such as New Zealand.

The stakes on Sunday could hardly be higher.

After defeat by West Indies in the opening game, South Africa, who routed Kenya in their second match, know how important it is

to beat New Zealand. The loss through injury of talisman Jonty Rhodes is a major blow, but Graeme Smith is a quality replacement. The tall left hander should slot in at the top of the order alongside Herschelle Gibbs, with Gary Kirsten dropping to number three.

For New Zealand it is not quite yet 'win or go home' time, but it is very close to it.

Fleming and his side are still unwilling to travel to Nairobi for their Group B match against Kenya and are almost certain to forfeit four points as a result.

After defeat by Sri Lanka in their opening match, New Zealand have set themselves the toughest of tasks to qualify for the Super Sixes.

Shaun Pollock's men are not only their bogey side -- the match is being played at the traditional fortress of South African cricket, the Bullring at the Wanderers.

No South African crowd gets behind their team like the 34,000 people who will be crammed in on Sunday.

Thrillingly loud and occasionally brutally abusive, the Wanderers crowd will be South Africa's 12th man.

"We've got a lot of players who've played South Africa a lot and we've got to get over the hurdle," Fleming said. "We look forward to the challenge, it's a great venue, against a good side in the World Cup. It's mouth-watering stuff."

Aus want replacement



REUTERS, Melbourne

The Australian Cricket Board (ACB) said on Friday it had sought permission to replace leg-spinner Shane Warne, if needed, following his shock withdrawal from the World Cup after testing positive for a banned diuretic.

The ACB said earlier this week that the positive dope test was "preliminary and subject to confirmation" and that, if Warne was cleared of doping, it would seek his reinstatement to the Australian World Cup squad.

"We are seeking confirmation of our understanding that we are able to replace Shane if needed," ACB chief executive officer James Sutherland said in a statement.

Warne is expected to appear

before an ACB anti-doping committee next week, when he could be banned for two years for taking a banned substance a day before a one-day international against England in Sydney on January 23.

"A replacement player has not yet been finalised as this is pending results of final Australian Sports Drug Agency (ASDA) testing of Shane's B sample," Sutherland added.

"But we have applied for ETC (World Cup Event Technical Committee) confirmation so that we can later move more quickly to select and have a replacement player approved, if needed."

Warne was man of the match in Australia's 1999 World Cup final win over Pakistan and has taken 291 one-day international wickets and 491 Test victims.

His anti-doping hearing will be held once the results of a second drug test, or B sample, are received

by Warne -- expected to be early next week.

The 33-year-old Warne, stunned the cricketing world on Tuesday when he held a news conference in Johannesburg, only an hour before his team began their World Cup defence, announcing he had tested positive for a banned substance and was withdrawing from the World Cup and returning to Australia.

He said he took a fluid-reducing tablet, which he did not know contained a banned diuretic, given to him by his mother on January 22. He has not said why he took the tablet.

The Sydney match against England was Warne's international comeback game after he dislocated his shoulder in December.

Diuretics are often used to help weight loss or as a masking agent for other drugs. Warne has said he did not take the pill for his shoulder or to mask any drugs.

Graeme in for Jonty



AFP, Johannesburg

Graeme Smith's return to the South Africa squad, following Jonty Rhodes' enforced international retirement through injury, has revived one of the sensitive racial issues which threatened to overshadow the World Cup.

Left-handed opening batsman Smith, 22, was controversially left out of the original 15-man squad despite averaging over 41 in 19 one-day internationals.

But Smith, a white cricketer, was dropped as South Africa included a record five coloured players in their squad.

That move followed a commitment given by World Cup supremo Ali Bacher, then managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA) to late sports minister Steve Tshwete in 1998.

South Africa's selection chief Omar Henry, the former Test spinner who as a non-white cricketer had to wait until he was 40 to make his international debut because of apartheid, appreciated Smith's position better than most.

"When I phoned Smithy and told

him that life was funny, he started laughing," Henry told the SAPA news agency.

"He knew what the call was about and that we had selected him as the replacement. He was delighted."

"No normal sport in an abnormal society" was the rallying cry of those who advocated South Africa's sporting isolation during the apartheid era.

However, any so-called quota enforced today is far less restrictive than the all-white sides of the apartheid regime.

Even so, problems persist. South Africa's victory on home soil in the 1995 Rugby World Cup final where president Nelson Mandela wore a Springbok shirt -- once seen as a symbol of white supremacy -- and black winger Chester Williams was in the XV, were hailed by many as evidence of the country's re-birth.

But Williams brought the myth-makers back down to earth in October when he said he had been racially abused by fellow Springbok wing James Small.

"Small called me a f kaffer and shouted 'Why do you want to play our game? You know you can't play it.'"

But South Africa does not have a monopoly on racial problems within sport and certainly not at this World Cup.

Just before the tournament began, Australia's Darren Lehmann was banned for five games after

uttering a racial obscenity after being run-out in a one-day match against Sri Lanka.

And on Tuesday, Lehmann's Australian team-mate Adam Gilchrist accused Pakistan wicket-keeper Rashid Latif of racially abusing him during the teams' World Cup opener in Johannesburg.

Meanwhile, England boycotted what should have been their tournament opener in Harare against Zimbabwe on Thursday because of safety fears.

But some saw England's stance as another example of 'imperial' arrogance with both the British and Australian governments having already attacked the policies of President Robert Mugabe.

On Friday, England were due to make an appeal for the match to be relocated to South Africa, amidst fears of a retaliatory boycott by Zimbabwe of their tour of England, starting in May.

South Africa, due in England in June, have also threatened to boycott their tour in sympathy with Zimbabwe.

Fears of a black-white split in world cricket have been a perennial fear for the sports' administrators.

"It's not cricket," is a phrase denoting shoddy behaviour.

But it's one of the modern game has struggled to live up to and, despite the sport's gentlemanly image, its racial problems are more than skin deep.

World sans

FROM PAGE 13
thrashed Pakistan by eight wickets at Lord's.

But, while playing for Hampshire in 2000, lurid headlines in a British tabloid told of how Warne, a married man, had left "dirty messages" on the answerphone of a nurse he'd met in a Leicester nightclub.

The subsequent furor cost Warne the Australian vice-captaincy and with his dream of skipping his country.

Another shoulder injury last December, appeared to put paid to Warne's dream of bowling out of one-day cricket at the very top.

But he battled back, determined that his career would not end with him being dropped like his long-serving teammates, Mark and Steve Waugh, both axed from the one-day side.

"A year or so down the track I don't particularly want to get the tap on the shoulder," he has said.

"I'm going out my way, the way I wanted to go out and while I'm still at the top of my game."

But now Warne, Australia's leading Test wicket-taker of all time and just nine short of becoming the first spinner in history to take 500 Test wickets, faces the worst exit of all.

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Dokic exits

AFP, Antwerp

Yugoslavia's sixth seed Jelena Dokic was knocked out by Japan's Ai Sugiyama in the first round of the 585,000-dollar WTA tournament here on Tuesday.

Dokic failed to vary her game sufficiently to trouble Sugiyama who had little problem overcoming the predictable nature of Dokic's baseline play to win 7-5, 5-7, 6-3.

Dokic was the only seeded casualty of the day. Seventh seed Patty Schnyder of Switzerland beat Belgium's Elke Clijsters 6-2, 6-3 and France's Nathalie Dechy, seeded eighth, defeated Claudine Schaul of Luxembourg 6-4, 6-3 in other first round matches.

Home hope and second seed Kim Clijsters also easily swept aside Switzerland's 17-year-old Myriam Casanova 6-3, 6-2 in a second round tie.

Wednesday's schedule has action between last year's champion Venus Williams of the USA and Belgium's Justine Henin-Hardenne, who was runner-up in 2002.

Steve behind

FROM PAGE 13
that I am 100 per cent behind Shane and I hope the allegations prove to be false," he said.

"If they are not I will still support him. People make mistakes, and being in the public glare it is very difficult for him. I feel sorry for Shane and his family and I hope that he comes through this strongly."

Waugh, who was passed over for World Cup selection, also said he thought 33-year-old Warne could come back after the allegations, despite the possibility of a two-year ban.

"I don't think anyone can cast too many stones because we all make mistakes. I guess when you make mistakes as part of the Australian side it is going to be big news, which it is."

"I am not going to sit here and judge Shane because I do not know the full details. It will hurt him for sure -- it is embarrassing for him, and no-one would like to have to front what happened to him yesterday and to have cameras in your face wherever you go."

"I certainly felt sorry for him, but I am sure he will get through this because he is a pretty strong, resilient character."

Underdogs plot upset

FROM PAGE 13
Ian Harvey, Matthew Hayden, Brad Hogg, Brett Lee, Darren Lehmann, Jimmy Maher, Damien Martyn, Glenn McGrath, Andy Symonds.

INDIA (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, Anil Kumble, Harbhajan Singh, Javali

Srinath, Zaheer Khan, Ashish Nehra, Dinesh Mongia, Parthiv Patel, Sanjay Bangar, Ajit Agarkar, Yuvraj Singh, Mohammad Kaif.

Umpires: David Shepherd (Eng) and Asoka De Silva (Sri) TV umpire: Brian Jarvis (Rsa) Match referee: Clive Lloyd (Wls)

'Leave us alone'

FROM PAGE 13
Warne met for several hours with lawyer Ian McCubbin at his home on Thursday and shunned all requests for interviews.

Warne is awaiting the result of his B sample urine test, which could become public on Friday. ASDA officials say the B sample is also likely to return positive for a banned diuretic.

He is likely to appear before an Australian Cricket Board (ACB) anti-doping committee next week.

Jason and Shane's mother Brigitte might give evidence at the hearing, with Warne confirming that a pill provided by his mum led to the positive test result.

"We understand there is a lot of public interest in this story, including Shane and our mum," Jason said in the statement released on Thursday.

"We, Shane and I, are always very open and happy to talk to media."

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