

Canada versus Murali

Problem Protea

Mission Namibia

REUTERS, Johannesburg
Canada may find themselves on the wrong end of a Muttiah Muralitharan

backlash when they take on Sri Lanka in a World Cup Pool B match in Paarl on Wednesday.
Muralitharan, so often Sri Lanka's

match-winner, has been reduced to bit parts in South Africa so far.

His skipper Sanath Jayasuriya was the man of the match in the team's opening victory against New Zealand with a century, and pace bowler Chaminda Vaas then took six for 25 against Bangladesh.

Muralitharan, at his most effective in Test cricket, has claimed more than 300 career one-day victims but has been barely noticed at this World Cup, despite chipping in with five wickets at 13.40 runs apiece.

Batsman Ian Billcliff, who top-scored for Canada in their opening two games, told the news agency by telephone on Monday: "I haven't played against him before but there's still a lot you can do to prepare in the nets."

"However, until you get out there against him and get a good look at

AFP, Johannesburg

The splits developing in the South African World Cup squad widened even further on Tuesday when opening batsman Gary Kirsten hit back at those players who hanker for late, disgraced ex-skipper Hansie Cronje.

Kirsten told his teammates to lay off current captain Shaun Pollock, warning them they should question their own part in the team's present crisis where two defeats in three games have placed their World Cup campaign in jeopardy.

"Personally I feel Shaun has done a very good job," said Kirsten, who once served as Cronje's deputy.

"He came into the job in very trying circumstances and when he was in charge we played our best cricket, matching Australia both here and there. I certainly don't think

Shaun is to be blamed for where we are.

"Instead of blaming Shaun individuals should look at themselves as to why things have gone wrong," Kirsten told SAPA news agency.

Kirsten was unable to explain why certain players still hankered after Cronje and made public statements regarding their feelings but suggested that those making the statements should be questioned.

On Monday, Kirsten's opening partner Herschelle Gibbs joined the chorus in singing Cronje's praises.

"The passion with which Cronje played meant he was always keen and always believed we could win from any situation," Gibbs told AFP.

"Shaun is quite new to being a captain and he's obviously still got a lot to learn."

Before the tournament, Jonty

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AFP, Port Elizabeth

England will aim to carry on from where they left off against the Netherlands when they take on Pool A minnows Namibia here at St George's Park on Wednesday.

England, who forfeited four points after boycotting their opener against Zimbabwe in Harare on security grounds, cannot afford any slip-ups.

Against the Dutch, Nasser Hussain's men won comfortably enough. But, worryingly, the Netherlands belied their modest status by batting out the full 50 overs while England lost four wickets overhauling a small total of 142.

And Hussain knows that his team have to be utterly ruthless against the Africans.

"We are running out of chances. There's no coming back from a loss. We have to win convincingly," he said.

"We have to look at it like a knock-out cup run."
England are likely to stick with the

same side that defeated the Dutch, a match where rookie fast bowler

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FORM GUIDE		
Sri Lanka	V	Canada
AFP, PAARL		
Form guide for Sri Lanka and Canada ahead of their World Cup Group B clash at Boland Park here on Wednesday:		
Sri Lanka (won 4 lost 6)		
Feb 14 2003	beat Bangladesh by 10 wickets	Pietermaritzburg
Bloemfontein	beat New Zealand by 47 runs	
Jan 21 2003	lost to Australia by 9 wickets	Melbourne
Jan 17 2003	lost to England by 19 runs	Adelaide
Jan 15 2003	lost to Australia by 4 wickets	Brisbane
Jan 13 2003	beat England by 31 runs	Sydney
Jan 9 2003	beat Australia by 79 runs	Sydney
Dec 22 2002	lost to Australia by 142 runs	Perth
Dec 20 2002	lost to England by 95 runs	Perth

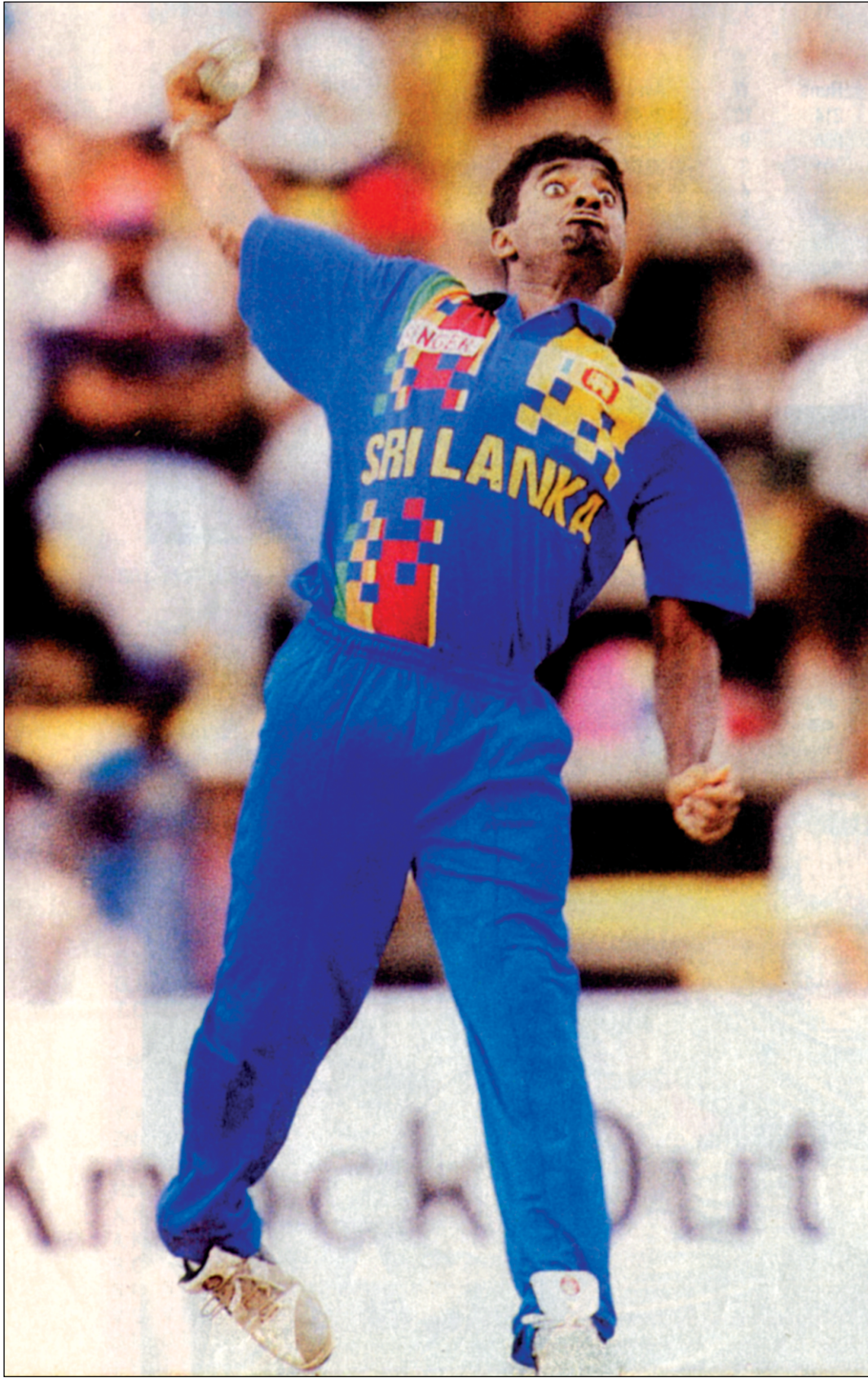


PHOTO: STAR FILE

Muttiah Muralitharan

For a can of coke!

INTERNET, Johannesburg

Johannesburg businessman Arthur Williamson has laid a charge of assault against Cricket World Cup (CWC) security officials after he was allegedly manhandled and evicted from the Centurion cricket ground because he had opened a can of Coca-Cola.

Williamson's eviction from the stadium during the match between Australia and India on Saturday was a sign of the unprecedented measures in South Africa to prevent ambush marketing at world championship sports events.

Williamson said that security officials grabbed him under his armpits and manhandled him out of the stands during his eviction.

"It is unacceptable that law-abiding citizens of this or any other country, for that matter be brow-beaten, publicly humiliated, assaulted and summarily ejected from a sports stadium for doing nothing worse than quietly and unobtrusively drinking a beverage that is not approved of by the official sponsors," Williamson said on Monday.

"I am very eager that our country present its best possible face to the world, and this sort of intimidation

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Zulu ranks No 1

INTERNET, London

South Africa all-rounder Lance Klusener is top of the official man-of-the-tournament standings for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2003 on Monday.

Klusener's match-winning bowling against Kenya and his destructive late batting assault that almost snatched South Africa victory in the curtain-raiser against West Indies have put him in first place in the Man of the Tournament standings with five points.

A point behind Klusener, who was man-of-the-tournament in 1999, is Holland's Tim de Leede,



LANCE KLUSENER

whose bowling unsettled India and batting frustrated England in successive matches. The Dutchman shares second place with Wasim Akram, Herschelle Gibbs and Sanath Jayasuriya.

The man-of-the-tournament is based on the cumulative man-of-the-match results, awarded by the ICC match referee.

After every game the match referee selects the top three players. As well as receiving a gold watch worth 12,000 rand, the man-of-the-match also receives three points towards the man-of-the-tournament award.

The second best player on the day receives two points and the third best gets one point.

ICC general manager (Cricket) David Richardson said: "The ICC match referees all have a wealth of international experience. They keep a close eye on the whole match and are therefore well-placed to provide a verdict on the top performers."

"The fact that those placed second and third also receive points towards the overall individual accolade makes the man-of-the-tournament an interesting sub-plot to the main event."

The ICC will provide further updates on the man-of-the-tournament standings as the World

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Onus on Vaughan

PORT ELIZABETH, INTERNET/REUTERS

Michael Vaughan is hopeful of reaping the same benefits from consistency that he did in Test cricket and find the kind of form which can propel England into the next stage of the World Cup.

Yorkshire batsman Vaughan was always a highly-rated player but his potential was only translated into tangible results in the last year when he scored 1,664 runs in 2002 to become the leading run-scorer in Test cricket.

Now England, who are hoping for similar results in the one-day format of the game, hope by giving Vaughan the regular number three spot in their World Cup line-up he can help them through the final four matches of the preliminary group and enable them to qualify for the Super Sixes.

He is already showing signs of some consistency, with his 51 in Sunday's six-wicket opening victory over Holland being his second successive one-day international half-century, and he now has his sights set on continuing that form in Wednesday's second match against Namibia at St George's Park.

"I'm going into these games looking to play exactly as I have all year," said Vaughan, who reached double figures only three times in his first eight one-day international appearances.

"I've only played about 20-odd matches and my first eight or so were shamboic performances against Pakistan and Australia in my first series, but I have been quite pleased with the way I've been playing.

"They've now given me a settled position at number three and it is one I feel comfortable in and if I can settle into that role I'm hoping I'll be able to produce the performances that can help England."

Many people are speculating that Vaughan may become more

than just England's most outstanding player after this tournament and he is strongly tipped to become Nasser Hussain's successor as captain.

Hussain has admitted he is considering his future after becoming frustrated with both the role of the England and Wales Cricket Board and the International Cricket Council in the recent Zimbabwe crisis, putting Vaughan firmly in the frame to become the new captain.

But Vaughan insists the England squad would prefer Hussain remained in charge, adding: "Nasser's doing a fantastic job and we're all behind him and hope he'll continue after the World Cup.

"First and foremost the job isn't available and I'm just concentrating on my batting, it's my first World Cup, which is a fantastic occasion, and I'm determined I'm going to go out and enjoy it.

"If at the end of the World Cup or in a year's time the job does become available I would like my name to be mentioned but for now I'm happy to carry on playing.

"I've not heard of many people turning the job down.

Vaughan, who captained an England A tour to South Africa and Zimbabwe in 1998-99, has emerged as England's top batsman over the past 12 months and has long been seen as a potential international captain.

"I'm not very experienced as a captain and there will be a number of players who would like to be mentioned," he said. "I'm always thinking about the game when I'm on the field but it's pretty hard being an international batsman, fielder and cricketer and that's what I'm concentrating all my efforts on for now."

Vaughan's performances were among the few highlights from the Ashes tour, with his three centuries earning him the player-of-the-series award. It followed a successful English season when he scored four Test hundreds.



PHOTO: STAR FILE

Michael Vaughan

Quips&Quotes

AFP, Johannesburg

Who's saying what at the 2003 World Cup:

"For Bangladesh it is not all about winning. It's a matter of how you minimise the margin of defeat."

Coach Mohsin Kamal dampening expectations

"I advised the ICC some time ago of my concerns and indicated that if my employer, the ECB, did not send its team to Zimbabwe, I would be unlikely to travel to the country."

English umpire Peter Willey worried for his security

"Just what is the matter with these people?"

Zimbabwe Cricket Union chief executive Vince Hogg dismayed at the boycotts carried out by the England team as well as umpires Willey and Neil Mallender.

"It is unacceptable that law-abiding citizens be brow-beaten, publicly humiliated, assaulted and summarily ejected for doing nothing worse than quietly drinking a beverage that is not approved of by the official sponsors."

Spectator Arthur Williamson after being ejected from Centurion for drinking the wrong brand of cola.

"That's what the World Cup is all about, playing against the best teams. The boys will be ready, they'll give it their best. If we get a good start, who knows what might happen?"

Namibia coach Dougie Brown whose team were bowled out for just 84 by Pakistan contemplat

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Remembering Allott

INTERNET, Christchurch

Geoff Allott bowled himself into cricket's record books at the 1999 World Cup. As New Zealand's title challenge gathers momentum in South Africa, he's clocking in for work at a Christchurch bank.

Four years ago, Allott took 20 wickets in England, tying for the most at a World Cup with Australia's Shane Warne. Two years later he quit after fracturing his spine for the seventh time.

"Retirement was extremely difficult to face," the 31-year-old Allott said in an interview.

"I was improving, but I now only look at the positives. So many fans would give anything to be part of an international team for just one day."

Injury-free, the left-arm fast bowler may have been part of the team that beat tournament host South Africa on Sunday to improve its prospects of advancing from the first round.

Allott said he accepted long ago his role would be "on the couch or at the bar" watching the television.

Allott now coaches a club team and is only able to play two exhibition matches a season. He makes a living as a manager for Australia & New Zealand Banking Group Ltd. His grandfather and father were accountants, so finance was "in my blood," he said.

"My role is to grow mortgage funds under management, through acquisition from third party originators like mortgage brokers," said Allott, who studied commerce and management at university, majoring in business and marketing.

At the 1999 World Cup, Allott took a match-winning 4-37 against eventual winner Australia and followed with 4-64 against runner-up Pakistan, helping New Zealand reach the semifinals.

When he failed to take a wicket against Pakistan second time round, the Kiwis' tournament was over. During the World Cup, he dismissed such top-ranked batsmen as

Australia's Adam Gilchrist and Michael Bevan, Pakistan's Saeed Anwar and South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs.

The last of his 10 Tests was New Zealand's first-ever win at Lord's in London, part of a 2-1 series victory over England in 1999. From then on, his back restricted him to one-day matches.

In 31 one-day internationals, he took 52 wickets at an average of 23.21 and was the fastest-ever to reach the 50-wicket landmark. Allott also played in Kenya when the Kiwis won their first overseas tournament, at the ICC Knockout Trophy in 2000.

On his last tour to South Africa in 2000, pain-killing tablets and injections before matches were losing their impact and he began to worry about the side effects. His only regret is pumping his body with so many pain-killers.

"I'm extremely grateful I am to have had the opportunities I did," Allott said.

"Many more gifted players didn't experience some of the things I got involved in. Now, I just love interacting with people at the bank."



GEOFF ALLOTT