

NZC may sue ICC

Pitch invaders irk ECB

Cricket

AFP, Manchester

English cricket chiefs are to ask the British government for new legislation to help them deal with pitch invasions after hundreds of Pakistan fans ran on to the field at Old Trafford here on Tuesday night.

At the finish of the opening one-day international, a tense day-night match where Pakistan beat England by two wickets with four balls to spare, players and officials were engulfed by jubilant Pakistan fans who overwhelmed the stewards appointed to keep them behind the boundary.

The scene was reminiscent of Pakistan's last one-day series in England, in 2001, when their fans staged pitch invasions at Edgbaston and Headingley, where a steward was assaulted, while Australia captain Steve Waugh led his team off the field at Trent Bridge when a match was interrupted.

Back then the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) asked the government for legislation to deal specifically with the problem of pitch invasions at cricket matches, saying loopholes in the existing law meant they could not tackle the problem effectively.

Following Tuesday's incident they plan to renew their calls for government action.

"We'll be looking at the legal situation with the Home Office in the very near future," said David Clarke, the ECB's corporate communications and events manager.

"Two years ago they told us to use the legislation which covered aggravated trespass, which they believed would do the job, but there

is clearly confusion with every police authority we work with.

"There is also confusion among the Crown Prosecution Service as to whether that legislation is appropriate - it's clear from the experience we've had so far that it's not appropriate."

However, he added: "We've not had any problems for two years, we've successfully changed the culture and people have stayed in their seats and stayed off the outfield until last night."

"This was a real test for cricket to see how far it had come in two years and it's a huge disappointment that we haven't been successful here in enabling the game to finish in an orderly way with the players and match officials leaving the field in a safe and secure manner."

The scene was reminiscent of Pakistan's last one-day series in England, in 2001, when their fans staged pitch invasions at Edgbaston

easily," Latif insisted.

He added: "Our strategy for the game was to target the middle order because we knew Michael Vaughan and Marcus Trescothick are experienced players and we succeeded in what we were trying to do."

Hafeez top scored with a one-day best 69 and afterwards he said: "I just followed the tips from my coach (Javed Miandad) who said to stay in and hit the loose ball."

Michael Vaughan, in his first senior match as England's one-day captain, said: "We let ourselves down with our batting. We were 30-40 runs short. But the way the young lads fought at the death, with the batting and the bowling was excellent."

He added: "Hafeez was the difference. We had guys who made 20s or 30s (Andrew Flintoff was England's top scorer with 39). We had the best of the pitch and should have got 250."

Pakistan were without suspended fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar, completing a two-match ban for ball-tampering.

But Latif said that while he's like him back in the side, this win showed that Pakistan were more than a one-man team.

"I will be delighted if Shoaib is back but this was a collective effort. I don't want us to rely on one person."

At the end of the match there was a mass invasion by Pakistan fans, despite pre-match pleas from Latif to stay off the field.

In scenes reminiscent of Pakistan's last one-day series in England, in 2001, stewards were overwhelmed by the sheer weight of numbers.

A concerned Vaughan said: "Someone in the hierarchy should look at because one of these days a player is going to get hurt."

"I hope it never happens but it only takes just one of them to have an object in their hands."

The series continues at The Oval on Friday and finishes at Lord's on Sunday.

Div II h'ball

SPORTS REPORTER

Orient Sporting Club recorded a 30-23 win over Old Bandura Nabin Setu Sangha in the Leo Pump Second Division Handball League that began at a court adjacent to the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

The winners led the first half 15-10.

Asadul scored highest eight goals for the winners while Rafique added seven.

On the other hand, Didar scored ten goals for the losers.

Earlier, State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman inaugurated the eight team league as the chief guest of the opening ceremony.

Hooper staying at Lancashire

CRICINFO, London

Former West Indian captain Carl Hooper has agreed to play for Lancashire for the remainder of the 2003 season.

Hooper, 36, had originally been brought in as short-term cover for Harbhajan Singh, but when Singh failed to recover from a finger injury, Hooper was the obvious replacement.

"I'm delighted that Mike Watkinson asked me to stay," said Hooper.

"I've really enjoyed my time here with Lancashire and it's a bonus to be able to work with the team over what should be a very exciting season."

Hooper has yet to hit top form with the bat this season, with a Championship best score of 74, but in Harbhajan's absence, his off-spinners have proved effective. He took five for 52 in Lancashire's ten-wicket victory against Leicestershire at Liverpool.

Mike Watkinson, Lancashire's cricket manager welcomed Hooper's continued presence at Old Trafford: "Carl's been a valuable addition to the squad and even though we were looking forward to Harbhajan arriving, Carl has filled the position admirably and under the circumstances, I'm glad that he's decided to stay with us."

PHOTO: STAR
State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman inaugurates the Leo Pump Second Division Handball League yesterday.

Feeling like a champion

WIMBLEDON

AFF, London

It has however been Davis Cup matches which have tended to get under his skin in the past and his two Grand Slam finals to date - the 2001 US Open and last year at Wimbledon -- have both concluded with accomplished victories.

"You can't help thinking about what you're playing for but I blocked it out as much as possible."

Walking out on to Wimbledon's centre court as defending champion is exactly the kind of thrill the Australian dreamed off as he honed the skills and extraordinary mental resilience that have driven him to the top of the men's game.

Now, as Monday's start to the defence of the title that means more to him than any other, the first tinges of nervous excitement have begun to kick in.

"It's going to be a special moment," the 22-year-old said.

"Winning that final last year was something I'd dreamed about it and that's what comes with it. It's part of the tradition of winning the tournament here."

Serena and Venus Williams have

ruled the roost at Wimbledon over the last three years and completely dominated the Grand Slam circuit in the 12 months preceding this year's French Open.

Serena and Venus Williams have

not one to let the events in Paris affect her future performances, however.

"It was a fight, that's all," she said after the defeat. "I am going to have to learn how to win. Got to keep smiling...I think if you keep smiling things work out."

Speaking about the match on returning to the United States, she said: "In a way there are things that you never forget. But there are things that you should forget."

"But it is hard, of course it is. I just try to think positive and tell myself I have got to get over that," she was quoted as saying.

The draw however has not been

kind to him. After an opening match against an opponent who will have been battle-hardened by coming through qualifying, Hewitt looks set to face 1996 champion Richard Krajicek in the second round.

The powerful Taylor Dent and Belarussian giant Max Mirnyi are

also lurking along Hewitt's path to a potential quarter-final against Andy Roddick, whose credentials as a

potential champion at the All-England Club were underlined by his win in last week's warm-up tournament at Queen's.

Zim smile on Carlisle ton

AFF, Taunton

Stuart Carlisle's third century of the Zimbabweans tour inspired them to a thrilling three run victory over Somerset here on Tuesday.

He hit 119 off 121 balls in the tourists 285-9 off their 50 overs, though the English county benefited from more weak bowling to make a real fight-of-it.

Somerset's veteran batsman Peter Bowler and Keith Dutch both made 93 to keep Somerset in the game.

Carlisle followed up first-class centuries against Worcestershire and Middlesex as the tourists posted a healthy total.

Zimbabwe made a dreadful start to their innings as Simon Francis removed both openers in an excellent new ball spell but Grant Flower (29) helped Carlisle add 50 to steady the innings.

Carlisle's main help though came from Stuart Matsikenyeri, who hit a valiant 66 off 62 balls as they put on 134 for the fifth wicket.

Injured Krajicek skips Wimbledon

REUTERS, Den Bosch

Former champion Richard Krajicek pulled out of this year's Wimbledon because of his longstanding elbow injury, his coach Rohan Goetzek said on Tuesday.

After being beaten by Olivier Mutis in the first round of the Ordina Open, Dutchman Krajicek said he was looking forward to another attempt at the title, but then changed his mind and withdrew from the championships.

Sisters under pressure

WIMBLEDON

REUTERS, London

the semi-finals.

The 21-year-old Serena was distraught after her 6-2, 4-6, 7-5 Roland Garros defeat, which was fought out in front of a tough partisan crowd who booed her throughout.

Serena had looked to have the match in her grasp at 4-2 and 30-0 in the third set when the umpire refused her the right to replay her first serve after the Belgian had raised her arm.

Serena was angry that Henin-Hardenne declined to intervene and the tearful American later added to the controversy by accusing her opponent of "lying and fabricating".

The highly-competitive Serena is

not one to let the events in Paris affect her future performances, however.

"It was a fight, that's all," she said after the defeat. "I am going to have to learn how to win. Got to keep smiling...I think if you keep smiling things work out."

What happens at next week's

Wimbledon could determine whether the American sisters' reign really has begun its demise or whether what happened at Roland Garros was nothing but a brief aberration.

Serena will be fired up to retain her Wimbledon crown and reassess her authority over the pretenders and would undoubtedly relish a return grudge match with Henin-Hardenne whom she could meet in

Real bag Becks

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world-class players."

Beckham, who was also being chased by Barcelona, added: "I would like to thank other clubs who were interested in signing me including Barcelona and I wish them every success in the future."

"But I really want to play in the Champions League."

Beckham also made a point of thanking Sir Alex Ferguson, his manager at Manchester United.

"I would like publicly thank Sir Alex Ferguson for making me the player I am today," he said.

"I will always hold precious memories of my time at Manchester United and Old Trafford as well as the players, who I regard as part of my family, and the brilliant fans who have given me so much support over the years and continue to do so."

Ferguson paid tribute to

Beckham.

"I've known David since he was 11 years of age, and it's been a pleasure to see him grow and develop into the player he has become," he said.

"David has been an integral part of all the successes that Manchester United have achieved in the last decade."

Zidane is the most expensive

player in the world. He cost Real 75

million euros when they signed him from Juventus of Italy in 2001. Figo cost them 62 million euros from

Barcelona in 2000.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

Result: Pakistan won by 2 wickets

Man-of-the-match: Mohammad Hafeez (Pakistan)

Next match: The Oval (Friday)

Umpires: Darrell Hair (AUS), David Shepherd (ENG)

Third umpire: Peter Willey (ENG)

Match referee: Gundappa Viswanath (IND)

Did not bat: Umar Gul

Bowler O M R W

Anderson 10 0 59 3

Gough 10 1 38 2

Flintoff 10 0 23 0

Giles 10 0 29 1

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