

Three English rookies



AFP, London

England's selectors named three uncapped players Saturday in their 13-man squad for next week's third Test against South Africa at Trent Bridge.

Following last week's crushing innings and 92 run second Test defeat by South Africa at Lord's, which saw the Proteas take a 1-0 lead in the five match series, the uncapped trio of in-form Kent batsman Ed Smith, Lancashire seamer Glen Chapple and Worcestershire off-spinner Gareth Batty have been selected.

Chapple comes in following the departure of Darren Gough, who announced his Test retirement after Lord's.

But Gough's fellow Yorkshireman, middle-order batsman Anthony McGrath, has been dropped from the team after scoring 51 runs in three innings against South Africa.

Batty, 25, adds to England's spin options, with left-arm Ashley Giles retained, although it looks like the pair will be competing for one place.

Also known for his lively fielding, Batty played two one-day internationals in Australia last winter.

Chapple, 29, a stalwart of the

county circuit, first came to England's attention when he went on the A tour of Australia seven years ago.

However, his long wait for a Test cap may not end at Trent Bridge. Regular reserve James Kirtley of Sussex, yet to make his Test debut, is again included, as is Durham quick Stephen Harmison.

The pace trio look set to be competing for the two seam bowling places alongside Chapple's Lancashire teammates James Anderson and all-rounder Andrew Flintoff, assuming England opt for just one spinner.

Smith, 26, however, is set to play after a fine season for Kent where he has been averaging over 60 in first-class matches.

Former captain Nasser Hussain and veteran wicketkeeper Alec Stewart both retain their places, despite speculation over their England futures.

Hussain's resignation immediately after the drawn series opener at Edgbaston meant Vaughan inherited a team he had not shaped for Lord's.

This squad is the first at Test level where he has had an influence in selection and there is no place for Surrey left-hander Graham Thorpe.

Left-hander Thorpe averages 41.87 in 77 Tests and was a public favourite to bolster England's middle-order.

But he has not been considered by England since reversing his decision to go on the Ashes tour of Australia because of personal problems.

England selector Geoff Miller said: "Ed Smith is in prime form and fully deserves his chance having hit six centuries for Kent this year."

"He will play in place of Anthony McGrath, who did very well against Zimbabwe but struggled a bit with the form against South Africa," former England off-spinner Miller added.

"And finally we have picked Gareth Batty and Glen Chapple as extra spin and quick bowling options, both of whom have performed well this season for their respective counties."

Batty said he believed his one-day international matches had made him a better player. "I'd like to think I tasted (international cricket) a little bit against Australia and I've got a few extra things in my game that are different now. The experience should stand me in good stead," he told Sky Sports.

SQUAD

Michael Vaughan, James Anderson, Gareth Batty, Mark Butcher, Glen Chapple, Andrew Flintoff, Ashley Giles, Stephen Harmison, Nasser Hussain, James Kirtley, Ed Smith, Alec Stewart, Marcus Trescothick.

Rodman acquitted

REUTERS, Los Angeles

A California jury has cleared former National Basketball Association star Dennis Rodman of civil claims that he drugged a woman and raped her at his Newport Beach home in 2001.

Jo Len Ann McGowen, 39, had asked the eight-woman, four-man jury in Santa Ana, California to award her \$755,000 (471,000 pounds) in damages in the alleged attack by the former Los Angeles



DENNIS RODMAN

Lakers star.

The jury deliberated for about 90 minutes before rejecting McGowen's claims that she was sexually battered, assaulted and falsely imprisoned at Rodman's home in March 2001 after having drinks with the five-time NBA star at his restaurant.

Bologan holds thin lead

AFP, Dortmund

Moldovan Grand Master Viorel Bologan held his narrow lead two days before the end of the international chess tournament here, following a draw against Hungary's Peter Leko.

The match between Bologan and Leko lasted a mere 19 moves before ending in a draw.

Meanwhile, the match between Viswanathan Anand, known as the "Tiger of Madras", number three in the world ratings and former FIDE world champion, and Russia's independent world champion Vladimir Kramnik also ended in a draw, after only 22 moves.

As a result, the two chess superstars, 33-year-old Anand and 28-year-old Kramnik, remained just one point behind the up-and-coming Bologan, who is ranked a mere 42nd in the world and is putting in his first appearance at one of Europe's big three tournaments.

Besides Dortmund, the other two tournaments are in Linares in Spain and Wijk aan Zee in the Netherlands.

Kramnik, who has won the Dortmund competition for six of the last eight years, has yet to notch up a second match win this year after his opening victory against 16-year-old Azeri prodigy Teimur Radzhabov.

Schuetzler stuns Agassi

AFP, Montreal

Andre Agassi suffered his first career loss to German Rainer Schuetzler, going out 2-6, 6-2, 6-3 Friday night to the man he thrashed in Australia eight months ago - then announced he's done with tennis until the US Open starts.

Last January, Agassi crushed Schuetzler in straight sets to lift the Australian Open crown.

Until the pair's quarterfinal meeting at the 2.45-million-dollar Masters Series, the American had not dropped a set against Schuetzler, eighth in the world.

That all changed as the underdog fought through from a set down to clinch the win against the 33-year-old tennis icon.

"I won't be playing in Cincinnati," Agassi said of the Masters Series starting Monday where he was seeded Number one.

"I've had enough matches. I'll spend a couple of weeks getting ready for the Open and roll the dice."

Agassi shrugged off reports that he might be bothered by a hip problem, saying: "He out-played me from the baseline, I got caught flat-footed a few times. My serve was nothing special, but that's not a shot I tend to rely on, so it shouldn't have mattered."

Sonali Bank

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On the other hand, Railway tasted their third defeat in six matches and remain on five points.

Pak-bound Tigers

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On the Pakistan-bound team might be a little different than the squad that toured Australia.

"Conditions in Pakistan are similar to Bangladesh and not like Australia. So there might be few changes," said the ex-Australian Test cricketer on Saturday.

Knowing that the wickets in Pakistan are more spinner-friendly Whatmore will add two tweakers at the expense one or two pacers. Whatmore carried five pacers to Australia.

FA Community Shield preview

MU, Arsenal renew rivalry



SPORTINGLIFE, London

Sir Alex Ferguson has called on his Manchester United players to put last season's title triumph out of their minds when they square up to Arsenal in Sunday's FA Community Shield.

Ferguson saw his team memorably claw back an eight-point deficit on the Gunners in the final two months of the campaign and eventually cruise to their eighth Premier League championship with a game to spare.

The red rivals renew hostilities at the Millennium Stadium with their domestic duopoly threatened by big-spending Chelsea.

And Ferguson knows if there is any sign of his team resting on past glories, their supremacy will be in severe danger.

"Last season was great for this club," he told MUTV on Saturday.

"The run from December onwards was absolutely fantastic. I think we deserved the championship purely on our own form."

"But that counts for nothing now. Yesterday is yesterday and tomorrow is very important."

It is a saying which captures Ferguson's entire footballing ethos, and which has made him the most successful manager Britain has ever seen.

It is why he has shown the ruthlessness to rid his squad of both David Beckham and Juan Sebastian Veron this summer, adding relative unknowns David Bellion, Eric Djemba Djemba and Tim Howard, with the promise of more to come.

Brazilian World Cup winner Klebersen will not be available tomorrow as his work permit application is not due to be heard until Monday, while Ferguson has admitted a new striker and a defender are still on his shopping list before the August 31 Champions League transfer deadline.

West Ham's Jermain Defoe, Ajax's Tunisian full-back Hatem Traabeli and Barcelona centre-half Carlos Puyol have all been mentioned as potential United targets, although the Old Trafford chief hinted there may be a surprise or two.

"We are targeting one or two areas in terms of bringing players in, but not necessarily the ones who have been mentioned," he said.

"You have to dismiss all that. We know what we are after."

If pre-season results are any guide, Ferguson need not be in too much of a rush.

His side returned from their high-profile US tour with a 100 per cent record and while Sporting Lisbon deservedly ended that run in Portugal on Wednesday, there were mitigating circumstances.

It's not Ruud to score



4THEGAME, London

Almost two years ago to the day, under the closed roof of the Millennium Stadium, Manchester United launched their latest star signing on an unsuspecting domestic audience. Typically he marked his entrance with a goal.

When he returns to Cardiff on Sunday, no-one sat in the stadium or watching at home on TV will need to be told who Ruud van Nistelrooy is.

In a week when the 13 million pound loss made on Juan Sebastian Veron has left some questioning Sir Alex Ferguson's transfer record, the brilliance of United's Dutch master stands as testament to his manager's judgement.

"He is already a great player and he is still improving. Without doubt he has the potential to become one of the greatest Dutch strikers of all time."

The words of Frank Rijkaard, who was a teammate of the great Marco van Basten and coached van Nistelrooy when manager of Holland, are a glowing tribute indeed.

"Mentally, he is absolutely fantastic," said Rijkaard.

"He is always looking for the goal and more often than not he seems to find it. More than that, he is a great team player, which is so important. If you can have that and be successful as well, it's a pretty good combination."

"I also believe he is still improving. He is stronger now, and cleverer. He is 27, so it should be another couple of years before he reaches his peak. If that is true, the end result will be staggering."

Since van Nistelrooy's arrival from PSV Eindhoven, he has not just exceeded expectations, he has almost surpassed every record set in front of him. If he had scored just twice more last season, he would have equalled Denis Law's 46-goal record for a

"It was one game too far," admitted the United chief.

"We only arrived on Monday evening and some of the lads were waking up at 3am because of the jet lag. The heat was unbelievable as well and that showed in our performance."



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

"It didn't spoil what went before though because we couldn't have asked for any more from the American trip."

"Everything was first-class and we have our sharpness back now which will hopefully help us at the start of the season."

Ferguson is vowing to treat the game more seriously than he has done in the past and most of his side selects itself.

The major dilemmas concern the goalkeeping spot -- with Howard, Roy Carroll and Fabien Barthez all in contention -- and who will play alongside Roy Keane in central midfield.

Nicky Butt is marginal favourite



ARSENE WENGER

to win that battle, although Djemba Djemba impressed on his debut in Lisbon and looks to be an astute summer arrival from Nantes.

The opposition should also get the juices flowing and Ferguson again locks horns with Arsene Wenger, who despite making only two close-season signings because of the cash restrictions imposed on him by Arsenal's

impending move to Ashburton Grove, the United boss expects to be steering another title drive.

"I'm sure they would like to have bought, but they are lacking in funds at the moment because they have bought this new stadium," observed Ferguson.

"It has put tremendous pressure on their club, although I still think they will be one of our biggest challengers."

"Tomorrow's game might tell you much about who will eventually win it, but I'm sure it will be competitive -- Manchester United matches against Arsenal usually are."

Arsenal skipper Patrick Vieira is expected to return for his first competitive outing since the knee injury which forced him to miss crucial matches as the London club were overhauled by United at the end of last season.

But Wenger has indicated that he plans to rest at least one of his other three French internationals -- Thierry Henry, Robert Pires and Sylvain Wiltord -- who are still completing their pre-season fitness work after an extended break following the Confederations Cup.

BATTLE WITHIN BATTLE



4THEGAME, London

Arsenal and Manchester United go head to head in the traditional curtain-raiser to the new season at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on Sunday.

FA Cup winners Arsenal are likely to still be smarting from losing their Premier League crown to United last season and will be looking to throw down the gauntlet early on.

While neither club has made any significant moves in the transfer market in the close season, United could now be said to be weaker without David Beckham and Juan Sebastian Veron.

Nevertheless, the two teams still boast an array of talent.

SOL CAMPBELL v RUUD VAN NISTELROOY

England international centre-back Campbell is arguably the country's best defender and one of the main reasons behind the Gunners' double success of the 2001-02 season following his high-profile

move from Tottenham.

Campbell is strong, agile and athletic, but he will have his hands full if van Nistelrooy starts as he finished last season.

The Dutchman is already heading towards greatness in Old Trafford's scoring stakes. The prolific marksman found the net 36 times in his first season with the Red Devils and bagged a phenomenal 44 last term.

PATRICK VIEIRA v ROY KEANE Vieira is an inspirational leader for Arsenal and the pivotal figure around which so much good work -- both in defence and attack -- revolves.

His reputation in the tackle is legendary and the France international is not shy when it comes to making his presence felt.

There is no love lost between Vieira and United's talismanic figure who now seems rejuvenated following a hip operation earlier in the summer.

Keane's no-holds-barred, win-at-all-costs attitude often provides the spark for his teammates.

THIERRY HENRY v RIO FERDINAND

Henry, last season's Professional Footballers' player of the year and

Football Writers' player of the year - pipping van Nistelrooy to the honours - has a lot to live up to this season.

It was Henry's all-round ability, in particular his selfishness in setting up so many goals for Arsenal, that helped him land personal glory, although he was left unsatisfied on the team front after the Gunners missed out on the title.

But his predatory instincts in and around the box, combined with pace and strength, make him a striker to be respected, although not feared as far as Ferdinand will be concerned.

The England international claims he has never anticipated a new season as much as the forthcoming one, and much will be expected this time around of the world's most expensive defender.

Ferdinand struggled with a number of niggling injuries last term which led to an unsettled run in the side and uncharacteristic drops in concentration. But on his day he lives up to his billing as one of the game's best.

India U-19s

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ents a triangular series between the Indian, Pakistani and Sri Lankan cricket academy teams in Sri Lanka in August; an Under-19 triangular tournament in Pakistan in August-September; and the Under-17 Asia Cup in India in November.

Samiul Hasan, the media manager of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), indicated that the Indian government's decision could affect the under-17 Asia Cup.

"It is difficult to say with certainty but if India does not tour Pakistan for the under-19 triangular event, the PCB would not be too keen for the Under-17 Asia Cup."

Clijsters, Davenport in last four



AFP, Los Angeles

Kim Clijsters is edging closer to replacing Serena Williams as the top-ranked female player in the world, but you can't tell from talking to her.

Reminded that she is just two wins away from becoming No. 1, the 20-year-old Belgian expressed surprise on Friday.

"I don't think I can do it," said top seed Clijsters, after winning easily over Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 6-1 in a quarterfinal match at the Los Angeles WTA tournament.

Joining Clijsters in the semis is second seed Lindsay Davenport, who cruised past South Africa's Amanda Coetzer 6-2, 6-4 in the night match.

Japan's Ai Sugiyama also moved on with a 6-2, 4-6, 6-2 win over sixth seed Magdalena Maleeva, of Bulgaria.

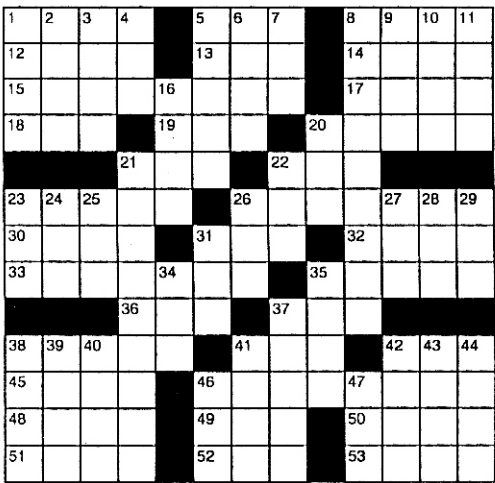
CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Wear away
5 Upper limit
6 Majorly
12 Re planos and such
13 Wide st.
14 Greek vowel
15 Annie's song
17 Autocrat
18 Navy rank (Abbr.)
19 Acknowledge
20 Fours top
21 McMah on or McKay
22 Hoke call
23 Cockey supply
26 Lever
30 Culture medium
31 Follow
32 Towel
33 Discuss athlete
35 Duck
36 Drench
37 The maiden
38 Youngster

DOWN
2 Night light
3 Gets ready to rumble
4 Court
5 Ricochet
6 Say with certainty
7 Church
8 Dinner after time
9 Move like molasses
10 Com-mand to
11 Sailors
16 Plate
20 Addition-ally
21 Potter's creator
22 Weep

Solution time: 21 mins.

WIT ADD DOWN
AGRA RAW OREO
ROAR TUE LEER
PHICV BEAD
HER GREWER
SATISFY KNAVE
LIRE DAD ACED
ADORE MITHONS
MATURE DOG
NAVE WHEEL
PECK CHY ELLA
AGUE GHT SASS
DOER TOR NET



CRYPTOQUIP

U Y D J S Z C A P S T Q I L K
D A X O I K D D P S F O R Q I
X L I M C T D, F U I J M D L F P Y D
Z D Q R T Y D U D M I C Q

Yesterday's Cryptquip: I AVOID ANY LARGE, COMFY RECLINING CHAIR. I SUPPOSE I MUST HAVE DEEP-SEATED FEARS.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: D equals E

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 trial and error.