

Lazio coach linked to Spurs

REUTERS, London

Lazio coach Roberto Mancini has talked to Premier League club Tottenham Hotspur about their vacant manager's position and wants to coach an English club, he has told Eurosport.

Asked if he had talked to Spurs, Mancini said: "These are the kind of things that one doesn't ever say but, yes, maybe it did happen. You know, sometimes we talk just to get to know each other. Just to test the water, type of thing."

"Yes, it might sound strange but Spurs are a great team and an important club. But these things were talked up a lot before and nothing happened. We'll see later on."

Tottenham have still not appointed a manager after sacking Glenn Hoddle in September following a disappointing start to the season. The club's director of football David Pleat has since been handling first-team affairs as acting manager.

Just a week ago the 39-year-old Mancini, whose contract with Lazio expires in 2008, told Italian television program Uno Mattina: "I intend to stay on at Lazio. I've lived in Rome for seven years and I'd like to remain here long-term."

But in his Eurosport interview he said: "I have a long contract with Lazio, but you never know. I have always said that I would like to train an English club as the football here is so enjoyable."

Aus hold

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looked at cricket," he said.

"You never know when somebody stands up and delivers and that's the way this game goes."

Both sides will be finalised on Friday, with Kasprowicz a strong chance to play after outstanding domestic form.

Australia experienced a brief injury scare today when all-rounder Andrew Symonds was struck on the foot while batting in the nets.

He limped off the ground but was later declared a certain starter.

India will wait to confirm if legspinner Anil Kumble has fully overcome the shoulder injury which has kept him out of the past two matches but he is expected to be fit.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA (from): Ricky Ponting (captain), Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden, Damien Martyn, Michael Clarke, Andrew Symonds, Simon Katich, Ian Harvey, Brad Hogg, Brett Lee, Michael Kasprowicz, Jason Gillespie, Brad Williams.

INDIA (from): Sourav Ganguly, Virender Sehwag, Sachin Tendulkar, VVS Laxman, Rahul Dravid, Yuvraj Singh, Rohan Gavaskar, Hemang Badani, Parthiv Patel, Sanjay Bangar, Ajit Agarkar, Irfan Pathan, Anil Kumble, Murali Kartik, Ashish Nehra, Lakshmi Prasad Balaji, Amit Bhandari.

ICC idea

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hand here."

The ICC holds its next meeting in New Zealand next month when the plans could be finalised.

It was not immediately clear how the ICC would pick its World XI, with options being an international selection panel or using player rankings as a guide.

Using the current PricewaterhouseCoopers rankings the team would be: Herschelle Gibbs (South Africa), Mark Richardson (New Zealand), Rahul Dravid (India), Brian Lara (West Indies), Inzamam-ul-Haq (Pakistan), Jacques Kallis (South Africa), Sachin Tendulkar (India), Muttiah Muralitharan (Sri Lanka), Shoaib Akhtar (Pakistan), Shaun Pollock (South Africa) and Makhaya Ntini (South Africa).

Kallis again



AFP, Johannesburg

Jacques Kallis slammed his sixth recent century against the West Indies as South Africa won a high-scoring fifth and final one-day international at the Wanderers Stadium Wednesday.

Kallis hit a career-best 139 as South Africa chased down a West Indian total of 304 for two, winning by four wickets with two balls to spare.

but there were some anxious moments before the win was clinched to the delight of a noisy capacity crowd of 30,000.

Rudolph was caught on the boundary and Lance Klusener fell to a sensational diving catch at mid-wicket by West Indian captain Brian Lara. Then Kallis was caught on the deep cover boundary during an outstanding 49th over by 19-year-old Ravi Rampaul in which only one run was scored.

Kallis' dismissal left South Africa needing nine to win off eight balls but Shaun Pollock hit off-spinner

Chanderpaul for the West Indies in East London in 1998-99.

The opening stand bettered the West Indian record against South Africa set by Desmond Haynes and Lara, who put on an unbeaten 154 when the West Indies won by ten wickets in Port-of-Spain in 1991-92.

Gayle went to his century off 116 balls with ten fours and a six as he and Chanderpaul made batting look easy, although their stand used up all but 69 balls of the West Indian innings.

Skipper Lara moved up the batting order to number three but was out quickly before Ricardo Powell and Gayle stepped up the pace, adding an unbeaten 92 off only 51 balls in the closing overs. Powell's 49 not out was made off 24 deliveries with four fours and two sixes.

Gayle finished one run short of his career highest score, 153 not out against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo earlier this season.

Lara was glad his team did not have to chase a target under floodlights. Ironically, though, conditions for his fielders became tricky towards the end as dew settled on the ground.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard of the fifth and final one-day international between South Africa and the West Indies at the New Wanderers Stadium Wednesday:

WEST INDIES

Gayle not out 152

Chanderpaul c Rudolph b Smith 85

Lara c Ntini b Klusener 11

Powell not out 49

Extras (lb-1, nb-2, w-4) 7

Total (For 2 wickets in 50 overs) 304

Fall of wickets: 1-193, 2-212

Did not bat: Sarwan, Smith, Jacobs, Hurley, Dillon, Rampaul, Collymore

Bowler

Pollock 10 2 47 0

Ntini 7 1 41 0

Nel 10 0 60 0

Klusener 8 0 42 1

Peterson 3 0 22 0

Kallis 4 0 39 0

Smith 8 0 52 1

SOUTH AFRICA

Smith b Gayle 58

Gibbs c Sarwan b Collymore 15

Kallis c c'paul b Rampaul 139

Dippenaar c Rampaul b Hurley 28

Rudolph c c'paul b Rampaul 35

Klusener c Lara b Collymore 4

Boucher not out 7

Pollock not out 12

Extras (lb-7, nb-2, w-3) 12

Total (For 6 wickets in 49.4 overs) 310

Fall of wickets: 1-31, 2-133, 3-187, 4-277, 5-285, 6-296

Did not bat: Peterson, Ntini, Nel

Bowler

Dillon 10 0 42 0

Hurley 9 0 56 1

Collymore 10 0 83 2

Rampaul 10 1 56 2

Gayle 9.4 0 61 1

Sarwan 1 0 5 0

Result: South Africa won by 4 wickets and won the 5-match series 3-1.

Man-of-the-match: Jacques Kallis.

Man-of-the-series: Kallis.

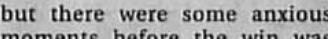
Gayle for four, two and six in the final over to wrap up the series.

Kallis came in after Herschelle Gibbs was out in the sixth over and made his runs off 142 balls and hit 11 fours and three sixes.

It was a crucial ending for Gayle, who made his 152 off 153 balls with three sixes and 12 fours. He and fellow left-hander Chanderpaul (85) put on 193 to set up a big total after the West Indies won the toss and made first use of a good batting pitch.

Gayle had made only 40 runs in the first four one-day internationals but was in superb form.

It was the highest individual score made by any batsman against South Africa in a one-day international, beating the 150 by



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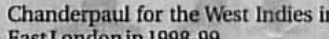
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AFP, Hobart

Western Australia made full use of a perfect batting wicket to put Tasmania on the back foot on the second day of their Sheffield Shield cricket match at Bellerive Oval here on Thursday.

Western Australia declared its innings closed at 562 for six with wicketkeeper Ryan Campbell compiling his ninth first-class century and top-scoring with 134.

In reply, Tasmania was 192 for three at stumps still 371 runs shy of overhauling Western Australia's first-innings total.

Venus advances

REUTERS, Tokyo

Venus Williams breezed past Japan's Saori Obata 6-3, 6-4 to reach the quarterfinals of the 1.3 million dollars Pan Pacific Open on Thursday.

The top seed, in her second tournament since a six-month injury layoff, played well within herself but still had too much power for Obata, taking 66 minutes to win her first match in Tokyo.

Williams struggled with her serve but otherwise showed no sign of the abdominal injury that sidelined her after she lost to younger sister Serena in last year's Wimbledon final.

However, Venus bristled when asked if she had "gone easy" on Obata in front of her home crowd.

"Wow, loaded question!" snapped Venus, who was upset in the third round of the Australian Open in her comeback last month.

The former world number one will face fellow American Chanda Rubin in Friday's quarterfinals.

Grimacing with pain, fifth seed Rubin battled through a knee injury to beat Japan's Akiko Morigami 7-5, 6-7, 6-3.

Meanwhile, Russian Elena Dementieva's poor start to 2004 continued as she was beaten 7-6, 6-3 by compatriot Tatiana Panova.

Third seed Dementieva, who crashed out in the first round of the Australian Open after complaining of a fever, fell apart after losing the first-set tiebreak 7-5 and failed to push Panova in the second.

Panova next plays seventh seed Jelena Dokic, who overcame Slovakia's Janette Husarova 7-6 6-7 6-1.

Indian

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(BCCI) after the "ambush marketing" deadline in 2002.

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Lewis set to retire



SPORTINGLIFE, London

Lennox Lewis is expected to finally end the speculation over his future plans by announcing his retirement from boxing at a London press conference on Friday morning.

The 38-year-old has been out of action since last June's win over Vitali Klitschko in Los Angeles when the Ukrainian was stopped on cuts in the sixth round.

Lewis has kept everyone guessing as to whether he would give Klitschko a rematch as the challenger was ahead on points when the contest was brought to a premature end.

The WBC last week stepped up the pressure on Lewis to make a firm decision on his future by declaring that he had 30 days to agree terms with Klitschko from February 1 or

the fight would go out to purse bids on March 15.

However, it now seems that former Olympic gold medalist Lewis has decided to hang up his gloves after a glorious 44-fight professional career spanning over 14 years.

Trainer Emanuel Steward had on several occasions stated that he would like to see Lewis dish out one final beating to Klitschko before calling it a day.

However, the writing looked on the wall at the weekend when Steward told American TV station HBO: "If you hesitate about making up your mind, that is not good."

"If he feels he can go back to the training it is going to take, and the grind it is going to take, he should do it."

"If he wants to go back up the mountain for this one final war, yes, but if he doesn't, my suggestion is just to leave and rest on your laurels."

Lewis became a world champion by default in 1997 when Riddick Bowe threw his WBC belt in a dustbin rather than take on the Briton.

However, Lewis went on to prove himself the best heavyweight of his era, becoming undisputed champion when beating Evander Holyfield in 1999 and gaining the career defining win he had always craved against Mike Tyson in 2002.

Two shocking knockout defeats against Oliver McCall and Hasim Rahman hampered his claim for a place among the all-time greats and a casual demeanour often failed to ignite the excitement needed to capture the public's affection.

But there can be no doubting London-born Lewis has been a great ambassador both for Britain and the sport of boxing.

BBC boxing analyst Duke McKenzie, a former world champion at three weights, told Radio Five Live: "This news hasn't come as a great surprise to the boxing fraternity."

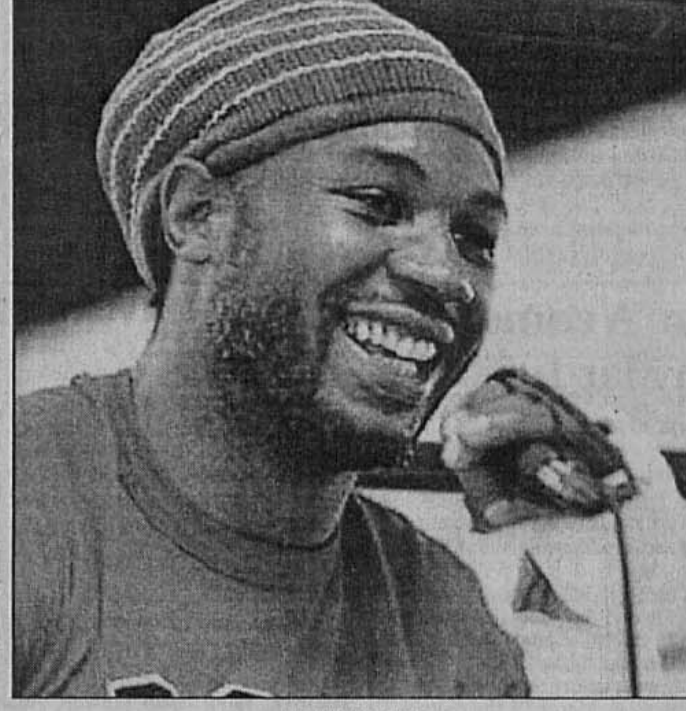
"Lennox has earned a hell of a lot of money from boxing and he doesn't have anything more to prove to anyone now and it is the right decision."

"He had nothing to gain from a rematch and everything to lose. Lennox has been fighting to establish what he called a boxing legacy and I think he's created that now."

"He's beaten everybody that's been worth beating in that division - Mike Tyson, Evander Holyfield, David Tua to name but a few."

"It's all about timing in boxing and Lennox has had his time. It would be crazy to keep on going because there's only so many times you can go to the well, there's only so many times you can go back into training camp and go through the sparring and the five-mile runs at five o'clock in the morning."

"Lennox just can't do all that any more so this is a well-timed decision. Everyone close to Lennox has urged him to retire and I, as a Lennox Lewis fan, am certainly glad he has decided to do just that."



LENNOX LEWIS

Hewitt eyes Davis Cup mark



REUTERS, Sydney

Lleyton Hewitt is on the verge of breaking one of his country's proudest sporting records when Australia begin their defence of the Davis Cup against Sweden in Adelaide on Friday.

The former world number one is just one win behind Adrian Quist's long standing record of 24 singles victories and could pass it if he wins his two matches.

Hewitt will get the chance to equal the record in his home town when he takes on Swede Robin Soderling in Friday's second singles rubber and could possibly better the mark against Thomas Enqvist in Sunday's reverse singles.

"Any record like that is pretty incredible and to have the opportunity to at least tie it in Adelaide would be an awesome place to do it," Hewitt told a news conference.

Australia's Wimbledon finalist Mark Philippoussis will play Enqvist in the opening match of the World Group on Friday while Todd Woodbridge and Wayne Arthurs will pair up against Jonas Bjorkman and Joachim Johansson in Saturday's doubles.

Australia's selectors have already said they would wait until Warne was eligible before naming the Test squad for the Sri Lanka series.

McGrath will make a decision on Friday morning on whether he's fit to play for the New South Wales second XI in a match starting on Monday in Hobart.

Philippoussis, the hero of last year's win over Spain in the final, has been at the centre of a public row over his disappointing showing at the Australian Open when he was knocked out in straight sets by Morocco's Hicham Arazi but the 27-year-old said he is unworried by the criticism.

"I'm not ever one for trying to get attention off the court, I just do my thing and I've got a job to do this weekend," he said.

"I'm looking forward to going out there and playing a solid match and trying to give Australia a one-love lead."

Australia are strong favourites to take the tie after winning the Cup for the 28th time last year but their non-playing captain John Fitzgerald is worried his players have not had a long enough rest.

Four of the last 11 champions have been knocked out in the first round and just three countries have successfully defended the title since the final round was introduced in 1972.

"It's an early start to the new year after we played the final in the last few days of November and now we have to play in early February," Fitzgerald said.

"It's difficult but we need to dig down and draw on the character of the players in the team to start

afresh."

Sweden, champions seven times between 1975 and 1996, have never won a Davis Cup tie in Australia and were thrashed 5-0 when the teams last met in the quarterfinals in Malmö last year.

"We want revenge for that one," Swedish captain Mats Wilander said.

"But I think first of all we just want to win the match."

The odds all seem to be heavily stacked in Australia's favour.

Not only are they playing at home on hardcourt that perfectly suits their players, but the rankings all point to their success.

Philippoussis is ranked ninth in the world and Hewitt 13th while Soderling is 54th and Enqvist 78th.

Bjorkman is the highest ranked Swede at 28 in the world but is only expected to play doubles although he could play the reverse singles on Sunday.

"All of our players have a chance to beat any of their players," Wilander said.

"I think it could possibly be a little bit of an anti-climax for the defending champions to play soon after having won Davis Cup."

"At the same time they're obviously full of confidence and I would think they want to keep the streak going."

Man denies killing Williams' sister

REUTERS, Los Angeles

The suspected triggerman in the fatal shooting of the older sister of tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams in a Los Angeles suburb last year has pleaded not guilty to murder and attempted murder charges.

Yutende Price, 31, was shot in the back of the head on September 14 as she and her boyfriend, Rolland Wormley, drove through the Compton neighborhood where she and her famous sisters had once lived.

Price, a registered nurse who owned a beauty salon in Corona, California, worked as an assistant and advisor to her younger half-sisters. She had three children.

Police arrested Robert Edward Maxfield, 23, last month in connection with the shooting. He remains jailed without bail, and is next scheduled to appear in court on February 20.

Prosecutors said Maxfield is the second member of the notorious Crips street gang charged in the shooting. Aaron Michael Hammer, 24, was arrested shortly after the shooting and has been ordered to stand trial on murder charges.

Hammer and Maxfield are both suspected of firing bullets into Price's SUV - Maxfield from an AK-47 assault rifle and Hammer from a .22-caliber weapon, prosecutors said.

Wormley, who was driving, told authorities he saw "firecracker flashes on the dashboard" and drove Price to nearby Long Beach after realizing that she had been shot, a police detective testified at a December hearing.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1. 4/746

2. Horse-

3. power

4. Lingerie

5. buys

6. Intimidate

7. Cham-

8. pagne

9. bucket

10. Dennis

11. Miller

12. specialty

13. Candle

14. count

15. Discard

16. Lanka

17. Brave

18. Liquid

19. measure

20. Movie

21. raling

22. Greek

23. consonant

24. Factor in

25. Einstein's

26. Ovine

27. remark

28. Mop

29. Model