

No Smith for three weeks

AFP, Bridgetown
A fractured left thumb will put West Indies opening batsman Devon Smith out of action for three weeks.

Sheetal h'ball

Arambagh Kirra Sangha came from behind to edge past Jatrabari Kirra Chakra 28-23 in the lone Sheetal Women's Handball League match at the outer stadium court yesterday.

FedEx Captain Cup golf held

Colonel A B M Golam Mustafa clinched the men's title while Fatema Motiur won the ladies' crown in the FedEx Captain Cup golf tournament at the Savar Golf Club on Friday.

OTHER WINNERS

First runner-up: Hafizur Rahman; Ladies first runner-up: Nasreen Ahmed; Senior winner: Maj Gen Mahmudul Hasan (Retd); Ladies senior winner: Peter Bauer; Junior winner: Master Redwan Bin Rokon; Best gross: Arshik Haider; Best Front Nine: Brig Gen Shawkat; Best Back Nine: Brig Gen Shawkat; became as Nearest to the pin: Brig Gen Abid; Longest Drive: Farooq Ahmed

StanChart cricket

FROM PAGE 13 (Khuina); Blue Bird High (Sylhet); Bhola Government High (Barisal) and holders BKSP and last year's runners-up Parjari Kalindi High.

Helal accepts

FROM PAGE 13 general secretary of the Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF). Helal said that they were not in a position to give the players enough time to prepare before sending them to Pakistan.

Inzy lashes out at pacers

CRICINFO/BBC, undated
Captain Inzamamul Haq has lashed out at Pakistan's bowlers, after his team suffered a humiliating defeat in the first Test at Multan.

In a column that appeared in Mid Day, Inzamam claimed that the bowlers were far from "world-class" and that the "hype balloon" had finally burst after they got carted around on the first two days.

"In my book, Imran Khan was world-class; so was Wasim Akram. In my book, Anil Kumble is world-class. On a dry, bald, flat wicket he got eight Pakistan wickets without match practice. My flock of pacers is nowhere near that class."

He went on: "You could trust Wasim and Imran to bowl out the opposition on any surface. They didn't rely only on pace. They had lots of ammunition to suit every surface."

"The same cannot be said of my pace quartet, who have bowled well only under helpful conditions." Inzamam was critical of the mental approach of the bowlers, and accused them of getting carried away.

"The pre-series hype about our one-day series, it is our bowlers who have let the side down." But he ended on a hopeful note.

"In Multan, the hype balloon finally burst and all the hot air has escaped. Hopefully, it will bring my pacers down to earth, and they will be able to pick themselves up and perform to their potential for a change."

Meanwhile, Pakistan manager Haroon Rashid has blamed a two-month gap between Tests for the poor performance by their seam bowlers in Multan.

"Our bowlers are rusty. They had not bowled long spells for over two months and that's why they struggled in the first Test," said Haroon.

"The top five Indian batsmen are technically very sound and have shown their class on all types of tracks." Shoaib Akhtar and Shabbir Ahmed both failed to take a wicket in Multan, while fellow paceman Mohammad Sami's two victims came at a cost of 110 runs.

Spinner Saqlain Mushtaq also had a poor game, with figures of 1-204.

"We took the right decision because we thought Saqlain's experience would come in handy for us." "Unfortunately, he couldn't deliver what was expected from him," said Haroon.

"It's now a make or break Test for us (in Lahore)." "They have realised their mistakes and we are confident we can bounce back in the series."

pace bowling versus India's batting seems to have gone straight to their heads. They have forgotten how to bowl straight.



INZAMAMUL HAQ

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3 friendlies for Brazil

AFP, Rio de Janeiro
Brazil will have three friendly internationals before playing Argentina on June 2 in South American 2006 World Cup qualifiers.

The CBF said the first match will be against Hungary in Budapest on April 28 and then they will face France in Paris on May 20 to mark the centenary of football's world governing body FIFA.

Brazil, led by Carlos Alberto Parreira, will then come up against a Catalonia selection in Barcelona on May 25.

Argentina lead the 10-nation qualifying competition with 11 points from five matches and travel to Belo Horizonte in the south east of Brazil for this clash between South America's greatest footballing nations.

Brazil, who lie third in the table with nine points, could only draw 0-0 in Paraguay in their last fixture on Wednesday.

Ranieri best in March

AFP, London
Claudio Ranieri gave his Stamford Bridge paymasters food for thought on Friday when he was named the Premier League's manager of the month for March.

The award comes after weeks of fevered speculation over the Italian's future at Chelsea which insisted England boss Sven Goran Eriksson was being groomed to succeed him in the manager's hot-seat.

Despite the pressure, Ranieri has presided over a run of three Premiership wins which have put the club into second place in the league behind Arsenal as well as a place in the quarter-finals of the Champions League.

"I am pleased," said Ranieri. "I want to say thank you to my players. When the manager achieves something it is because his players have won, have played well, have played with strong character and I am very happy, very pleased. It is the second time this season, unbelievable!"

The organisers of the award also praised the Italian. "Loved by the fans, and respected by his players, Claudio Ranieri has done a fantastic job at Chelsea under the media spotlight," said a spokesman for the awards' sponsors.

"He has always focused on what matters most, the football, and appears to be relishing the challenge before him." Despite his record at Chelsea and Eriksson having put pen to paper to stay with England, Ranieri is still expected to be replaced at the end of the season.

Celtic on course to be champs

REUTERS, Glasgow
Unbeaten league leaders Celtic will win their third Scottish title in four years this weekend if they beat Hearts at home on Saturday and champions Rangers lose.

Celtic are 19 points ahead of Rangers, who are at Motherwell on Sunday, with eight games left to play. They remain on course to become the first Scottish side to go through a season unbeaten in the modern era.

Glasgow rivals Rangers are the only other side to have managed it in 1898-99. "I think we are a very fine side," Celtic manager Martin O'Neill told reporters.

"It's not just one week, it happens consistently." O'Neill's side set a British record of 25 successive wins, which was ended by a 1-1 draw with Motherwell on March 14, and more records could tumble before the end of the season.

They could claim a record Scottish Premier League winning total of 110 points from 38 league games having drawn only two matches so far.

Stranger Davis

FROM PAGE 13 It was reported that Proshan has brought in some street urchins for training as part of an innovative idea. May be the exercise will produce the right results in future.

But at the moment it will be damage limitation for Shibu Lal's men against UAE, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Brunei, Iraq, Kyrgistan, Turkmenistan and hosts Jordan.

Manchester United's Paul Scholes

(No 18) slots the ball past Arsenal keeper Jens Lehman (L) during their FA Cup semifinal clash yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

FA Cup semifinal Scholes shatters Gunners

Football
It means United travel to Cardiff for the final with hopes of salvaging their season with silverware.

Arsene Wenger, meanwhile, will turn his attention to the Champions League quarterfinal against Chelsea on Tuesday and maintaining their lead in the Premiership.

Arsenal's talisman Henry was restricted to a substitute's role, while Van Nistelrooy was ruled out by a knee injury.

And the Gunners almost started in sensational fashion as they did everything but score in the third minute.

Carroll dived at Bergkamp's feet as he raced clear, and from the rebound Wes Brown was forced to head the Dutchman's shot off the line.

The resulting corner saw Edu chip on to the bar with Carroll beaten, only for the goalkeeper to recover miraculously to block Kolo Toure's header.

But United held Arsenal in their grip in the second half, despite the introduction of a host of attackers, wrecking their rivals' hopes of repeating their 1999 feat of winning the league, FA Cup and Champions League.

Blame it on fixtures

REUTERS, Asuncion
As South America's footballers flew back to Europe after this week's World Cup qualifiers, they may be wondering whether the so-called co-ordinated international calendar was just a figment of FIFA's imagination.

Many will face their third match in eight days in different continents at the weekend after being subjected to exactly the sort of treatment the calendar was supposed to avoid.

Players such as Hernan Crespo of Argentina and Chelsea, Ronaldo of Brazil and Real Madrid and Roque Santa Cruz of Paraguay and Bayern Munich were among them.

All played for their European clubs last week, then flew overnight to South America, played for their countries on Tuesday or Wednesday and travelled straight back to their clubs.

Most of the South American coaches had to make do with a single training session before matches which were crucial to their hopes of reaching Germany in 2006.

Paraguay coach Anibal Ruiz rated his team's meeting in Asuncion with Brazil as the most important of their campaign.

Yet he had only two brief sessions with his players before what should have been one of international football's matches of the year.

But, in a move apparently aimed at appeasing European clubs

FIFA also ruled that the friendly international rule would apply in which players would only have to be available to their national teams 48 hours before kick-off compared to five days for competitive games.

Like many compromise solutions, it ran the risk of pleasing nobody.

The Argentina Football Association (AFA) protested to FIFA after Inter Milan included midfielders Javier Zanetti and Cristian Gonzalez in their squad for a Serie A match with Reggina last Sunday.

Argentina coach Marcelo Bielsa released them, saying they would not be in the right shape to face Ecuador in Buenos Aires on the Tuesday evening if they only arrived on Monday morning.

"It's an aggression against the players because it forces them to take on commitments in the wrong conditions," said Bielsa.

"They weren't going to be able to meet the demands of professional football."

He added: "I told them that asking them not to travel in these circumstances showed that we value and recognise them as players."

'54 World Cup winners were dopers?

Football
"Too call it doping is way off the mark," said Stenger.

Tim Meyer, a DFB physician, told Germany's sport news agency SID that vitamin C does not enhance performance and thus is not on any list of banned substances.

"Vitamin C has no performance-enhancing effect," he said. "I can't imagine how it was against any rules."

West Germany's shock 3-2 victory over Hungary in the finals of the 1954 tournament, coming less than a decade after World War Two, lifted the ravaged nation as it emerged from its post-war trauma and helped trigger the ensuing "Economic Miracle".

A film about the team called "Das Wunder von Bern" (The Miracle of Bern) was a huge 2003 box office hit in Germany, released ahead of the 50th anniversary celebrations of that first World Cup title due later in 2004.

Bild quoted former West Germany physician Franz Loogen, 84, as saying he gave the players Vitamin C injections. The allegations were initially made in the ARD public television broadcast.

Loogen said he told the players lab rats given Vitamin C injections were able to swim three hours longer.

Bild also quoted Walter Broennimann, the former groundsman at Berne stadium, saying drains were filled with vials.

"After the final match I found the empty vials in the drains," Broennimann said. He said he turned them over to a Swiss company and was asked to keep quiet about it.

One surviving player from 1954, Horst Eckel, told Bild he got injections but said it had nothing to do with doping.

"I received injections," he said. "It annoys and enrages me that 50 years later something like this is being whipped up. We didn't know what the word 'doping' meant at all."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 37 West Side Story; 4 Porcine parents; 8 Use a kiln; 12 Miss Piggy's pronoun; 13 Drudgery; 14 Wading bird; 15 Highly excited; 17 Iodine source; 18 Recede; 19 Crystal; 20 Ignite; 22 See for Miles; 24 Choir voice; 25 Quite quickly; 29 "Bravo!"; 30 Ghana's capital; 31 Prior to; 32 Lined up; 34 Hemsly silcom; 35 Internet addresses; 36 Sends forth

DOWN 1 "Blue?"; 2 Trinity member; 3 Long-fellow subject; 4 Offend; 5 Leak; 6 Whom to "ease on"; 7 Crafty; 8 Marshall Islands; 9 The third man; 10 Slay; 11 Catch sight of; 16 Poi base; 19 Mexican peninsula; 20 Neighborly; 25 Reykjavik's land (Abbr.); 26 Render womanly; 27 Worry; 28 Longings; 30 Emanation; 33 Bee products?; 34 Asian nurse; 36 Gen. Rommel; 37 Tackles the lawn; 38 Neighborhood; 39 Resound; 40 Hoedown; 42 Picks out of a lineup; 43 Born; 44 Bud's partner; 45 Alway

CRYPTOQUIP
KH WTRQ GTC VYXXMV TA
E MKYYTJ XUXQW AKCLN
K G VEW WTR LEUX E
V THN VMTN HTQLXQ
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO CURB YOUR SALT INTAKE, I WOULD RECOMMEND SHAKING THE HABIT.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Y equals L

Football
REUTERS, Berlin
The German Football Association (DFB) has denied reports that players with the West Germany team which won the 1954 World Cup had used performance-enhancing stimulants but said they had received vitamin treatments.

DFB spokesman Harald Stenger told Reuters on Wednesday doping allegations against the 1954 side reported by Germany's ARD public television network and repeated on the front page of Germany's top-selling Bild newspaper were completely unfounded.

"The players were treated with glucose and Vitamin C - as a means to help them regenerate," Stenger said when asked about reports some of the 1954 players had received injections after the former groundsman at the stadium in Berne, Switzerland said he found used vials in the drains of the dressing room.



PHOTO: AFP

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