

Rain robs Kiwis

Cricket

AFP, Birmingham

Rain forced the abandonment of the NatWest Series one-day international between New Zealand and the West Indies at Edgbaston on Saturday.

New Zealand, in a match already reduced by rain to 21 overs per side, were well-placed at 97 for two from 13.4 overs chasing a revised target of 140, when the umpires finally called a halt.

The result saw both sides awarded three points each for a no-result and left New Zealand top of the table after their tournament opener against England at Old Trafford on Thursday was washed out without a ball being bowled.

"There is nothing you can do," New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming told reporters.

"Only one team (New Zealand) would have won. We're disappointed not to get all the points but we got more cricket than we thought.

"It wasn't an easy game but we were on the right side for most of it."

West Indies captain Brian Lara, whose rapid 36 at least gave the crowd some entertainment, admitted: "New Zealand were well set to win before the rain saved us. Batting-wise it was very tough."

But of his own 22-ball innings, featuring one six and four fours, left-hander Lara modestly added: "You have to try something."

Hamish Marshall, 24 not out, and Scott Styris, 26 not out, were both in form when play ended at 1820GMT with their team needing 43 runs off 44 balls.

The duo shared an unbroken stand of 47 in 41 balls.

Earlier Lara's innings steered the West Indies to 122 for four after they had stumbled to 59 for three.

He took 23 runs off the penultimate over from Jacob Oram before he was out hit wicket trying to play another audacious stroke off Chris Cairns.

That over featured four successive fours and a six. Going right

across his stumps the left-hander struck three legside fours, the last an outrageous flick to fine leg.

Lara then carved Oram for four and then sent him for six over cover before taking a single to lighten the gloom.

Together with Ramnaresh Sarwan (18 not out) he put on 56 in 29 balls.

The first over of New Zealand's innings, bowled by Ravi Rampaul, cost 18 runs with four wides and two no-balls plus a six and a four from Fleming.

But on 12 left-hander Fleming was brilliantly caught by a diving Ricardo Powell at backward point off Jermaine Lawson, New Zealand 20 for one.

But West Indies' out-fielding was sloppy throughout.

With the Kiwis needing 46 runs to win off 48 balls, Lara gambled by recalling 19-year-old quick Rampaul despite his poor first over.

But after bowling four more balls the sight of him stumbling in his run-up to the crease on a sodden outfield persuaded the umpires to call off the game.

Even if conditions had relented, play could not have continued as this last stoppage signalled the end of the game under tournament rules.

Rain had already reduced the match to 35 overs per side when a

fresh downpour at 1408GMT forced the players off the field with the West Indies 39 without loss.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard of the NatWest Series one-day international between New Zealand and the West Indies at Edgbaston Saturday: WEST INDIES

Gayle c McCullum b Oram	30
Chanderpaul lbw b Styris	14
Smith c McCullum b Oram	1
Sarwan not out	18
Lara hit wicket b Cairns	36
Powell not out	1
Extras: (lb-10, w-10, nb-2)	22

Total: (For 4 wkts in 21 overs) 122  
Fall of wickets: 1-56, 2-59, 3-59, 4-115

Did not bat: Bravo, Jacobs, Bradshaw, Rampaul, Lawson

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Tuffey	5	1	10	0
Franklin	5	1	25	0
Cairns	4	0	18	1
Vettori	1	0	5	0
Oram	4	1	42	1
Styris	2	0	12	2

NEW ZEALAND

Fleming c Powell b Lawson	12
Astle c Gayle b Lawson	13
Marshall not out	24
Styris not out	26
Extras: (lb-5, w-14, nb-3)	22

Total: (For 2 wkts in 13.4 overs) 97  
Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-50

Did not bat: McMillan, Cairns, Oram, McCullum, Vettori, Franklin, Tuffey

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Rampaul	1.4	0	20	0
Bradshaw	4	0	19	0
Lawson	3	0	18	2
Bravo	2	0	13	0
Smith	2	0	15	0
Gayle	1	0	7	0

Result: No result.

Fitter, trimmer

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hitter if necessary.

"He is in tremendous form and a Test century in the West Indies has given him more confidence," he added.

Whichever, who believes spinners will play a big part in the tournament, informed that a Sri Lankan bowling coach will work with the team for two weeks in addition to batting coach Owen Mottu.

He also told that as the Sri Lankan national team and the A team are abroad, Bangladesh's opposition in the three warm-up games would be teams made up of Under-23 and club cricketers.

National captain Habibul Bashar mentioned that he was happy with the squad and the openers.

"Javed is a seasoned batsman and Ashraful has opened in the past. We also have an option to use Manjarul Islam as well," said Bashar who wanted to give some time to the openers to settle.

"Our target would be to win the close matches. We came close on a number of occasions in the recent past but failed to grab them. We had some positives in the West Indies and we want to improve on that."

Bashar who has yet to transform his Test performance to one-day arena, dismissed thoughts of his players lacking big-hitting ability.

"The players were under pressure due to top order failures. We have players who can hit the ball. I believe if a player like (Khaled) Mahmud clicks in the late order, we will do better."

Bangladesh, yet to win a single match in the Asia Cup, will open their campaign against associate members Hong Kong in a group that features reigning champions Pakistan.

Glenn ready to go

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

An elated Glenn McGrath is completely satisfied with his fitness and has declared himself "ready to go" for the first Test series against Sri Lanka.

McGrath had gone into the tour game, between the Northern Territory Chief Minister's XI and the Sri Lankans, under plenty of pressure after a less than satisfactory performance in the one-dayers in Zimbabwe.

Though McGrath finished with modest figures of 1 for 25 in his 14 overs in the second innings, he was happy with the rhythm that he found.

"I'm a lot more confident now than what I was before this match here. That's the best my ankle has felt and the best I've hit the crease for the last two-and-a-half years and to me that was the secret to me bowling well."

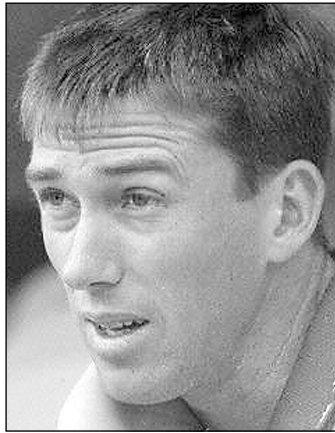
McGrath also added a bit about his confidence levels, which seemed to have shot up exponentially.

"My confidence is, yesterday morning compared to now, it's 500 per cent better. I'm so much more confident and couldn't be happier at the moment."

Justin Langer, who captained the Chief Minister's XI, revealed that he spoke a lot to McGrath before the game and advised him to be a little patient.

"I was really keen to encourage him and just tell him to be patient because he has got a bit down on himself. Again he is human and he

probably hasn't played much in 12 months. His confidence is down a little bit which happens to everyone, and probably never really happened to him throughout his whole career."



GLENN MCGRATH

Langer termed McGrath's performance as "fantastic" for most of the game, and said he would believe it wouldn't be long before he was back to his best.

"It's like a Rolls Royce," he added, "you've got to be a bit patient, get the oil going, I thought he just looked fantastic for this almost the whole game."

And he even suggested that McGrath should be given the new ball by adding, "If I was Ricky [Ponting], I'd give him the new ball. The boys get here tomorrow (Monday) so no doubt we'll talk about it. I just thought he looked as you always expect Glenn McGrath to bowl."

Ganguly welcomes Boycott invitation

CRICINFO, undated

Sourav Ganguly has on Sunday spoken out enthusiastically in favour of the Indian board's decision to invite Geoffrey Boycott to spend a couple of days giving batting tips to the Indian side.

Boycott will spend July 4 and 5 with the national squad in Chennai, during their training camp for the season ahead.

Speaking to the Mumbai newspaper, Mid Day, Ganguly said: "It is a great idea to invite him [Boycott] to help us. Boycott is a great communicator. Our board should be given credit [for inviting him]. They are thinking and moving in the right direction."

Boycott, who has spent a lot of the last few years in the commentary box, wears his fondness for Ganguly on his sleeve, often referring to him as 'The Prince of Calcutta' or even just 'My Prince'. Ganguly reciprocates that affection with respect, and has, in the past, turned to Boycott for help with his batting technique.

"Not only me but everybody in the side will benefit," said Ganguly. "He knows [the] A to Z of cricket so well that whenever I have spoken to him I have benefited. All the current Indian cricketers enjoy a great relationship with him."

Forget tennis!

FROM PAGE 13

But one tennis player still smiling about football was Australia's Mark Philippoussis.

With no Australian representation in Portugal, the answer for Philippoussis was easy when he was asked whether he too had taken to supporting England.

"It was tough watching, but I wouldn't say I adopted them, no, I'm Australian," Philippoussis said.

"But I tell you what, that Greek blood in me, I'm going for Greece."

Greece beat France 1-0 on Friday night to reach the semi-finals.

Sweden is by far the best-represented country when it comes to the chance of claiming a tennis-football double with Jonas Bjorkman, Joachim Johansson, Thomas Enqvist and Thomas Johansson still in the singles draw.

Dutchman Sjeng Schalken and the Czech Republic's Denisa Chladkova are also in the running.

Federer, Roddick

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conqueror of Venus Williams, Croatia's Karolina Sprem.

Top seed and defending champion Federer set up a last 16 meeting with Croatian giant Ivo Karlovic when he outclassed Johansson in a third round tie.

Karlovic, who ousted defending champion Lleyton Hewitt of Australia in the first round last year, defeated Spain's Feliciano Lopez in four service-dominated sets.

A single break in each of the first two sets and two in the third were enough for Federer to win his 20th consecutive match on grass.

Opening activities on what was only the third time in Wimbledon history that the middle Sunday had been used for play, Federer never looked in any danger and in three rounds he has lost just 19 games and has yet to be broken on serve.

Roddick, losing semi-finalist here last year to Federer and the No. 2 seed this time, maintained his supremacy over US contemporary Dent with a straight sets 6-3, 7-6, 7-6 win in a tie dominated by big serves.

The American let a match point slip away at 6-5 up but he dominated the decisive tie-break 7-1 ending it with another big serve.

Henman blew hot and cold against old rival Hicham Arazi of Morocco, going a break down in all four sets before winning 7-6, 6-4, 3-6, 6-2.

It was a performance that had a youthful and noisy Sunday afternoon crowd at times despairing and at times jubilant.

A reborn Philippoussis came through against Chile's Fernando Gonzalez winning 6-4, 6-1, 6-7, 6-4.

There were third round wins also for German youngster Florian Mayer against South African veteran Wayne Ferreira and for 2002 semi-finalist Xavier Malisse of Belgium in straight sets over Karol Beck of Slovakia.

Vincent Spadea ousted eighth seed Rainer Schuettler of Germany 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 whilst rising Croatian Mario Ancic defeated 25th seed Dominik Hrbaty of Slovakia 7-5, 6-3, 7-5.

Seventh seeded Capriati moved into the fourth round of the women's tournament with a 7-5, 6-1 win over Nathalie Dechy, the French 25th seed.

Capriati, who has never made it beyond the semi-final in 10 previous attempts, next faces Russian 10th seed Nadia Petrova who defeated in straight sets Tatiana Perebylnis of the Ukraine.

The 19-year-old Sprem, kept a cool head on her to win two tie-breaks against veteran American Meghann Shaughnessy and she next plays Bulgarian veteran Magdalena Maleeva for a place in the quarter-finals.

Also into the last 16 were Paola Suarez of Argentina and Rita Grande of Italy.

Goran rates Roger highly



WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

Goran Ivanisevic lost Wimbledon finals to Pete Sampras and Andre Agassi before he triumphed himself but the Croatian insists that Roger Federer will go on to be a better player than both the American legends.

"I think that Federer is the biggest talent from all the players I have ever played in my career," said Ivanisevic, the 1992 champion here, who finally bowed out of tennis after his third round loss to Lleyton Hewitt on Friday.

"I don't know if he's going to win so many Grand Slams like Pete, but definitely he's the most talented player I ever played."

Ivanisevic has now joined seven-time Sampras and Boris Becker, three times a winner, in retirement while Agassi knows the clock is ticking on his remaining time at the top level.

"On court, Roger is like a magician. The way he plays, he's back, he comes in. When you look at him, you think tennis is a very easy sport, but it's not."

Despite his admiration for the Swiss world number one, Ivanisevic also looks back fondly on his decade-long rivalry with the Americans.

In 1992, 1994 and 1998 he lost three finals here to Andre Agassi

ICC puts IWCC WC on track

BBC ONLINE, undated

An injection of funds from the International Cricket Council will rescue next year's Women's World Cup.

A merger between the ICC and the International Women's Cricket Council (IWCC) is expected to be rubber-stamped when the ruling body meets this week.

South Africa, hosts of the 2005 showpiece, are believed to have failed to attract corporate sponsorship.

An IWCC spokeswoman told BBC Sport: "They should have got their act together a long time ago but they didn't."

The tournament is scheduled to take place in February, but the United Cricket Board of South Africa has not yet released an itinerary.

The last IWCC World Cup in 2000, held in New Zealand and won by the hosts, experienced similar financial problems before Cricinfo belatedly came on board.

"South Africa have been slow on this issue ever since they knew they were going to host the tournament some time ago," the spokeswoman added.

Cricketing Sunday

AFP, Srinagar

With Islamic rebels forcing the closure of cinema halls, video parlours and bars in Indian Kashmir, thousands of Muslim males turn every Sunday to the one form of public entertainment still left to them -- cricket.

"If I don't play cricket on Sundays I feel uncomfortable throughout the week," said Muzaffar Wani, 34, a schoolteacher and father of two.

Like fellow cricketers across the disputed territory, Wani rises around 5:00 am every Sunday, puts on his sports shoes, picks up a few cricket stumps and leaves home so as to be in time to grab some space for a cricketing encounter.

At Srinagar's Eidgah grounds, which adjoin a graveyard where separatists, Muslim rebels and Kashmiris are buried, more than 70 teams play cricket every Sunday. Every other bit of flat open ground in the summer capital Srinagar is occupied by hundreds of other teams.



PHOTO: AFP

KASHMIR'S SUNDAY LEAGUE! Kashmiris play cricket in Srinagar yesterday.



PHOTO: AFP

Defending champion Roger Federer of Switzerland celebrates after defeating Sweden's Thomas Johansson at Wimbledon yesterday. Federer won 6-3, 6-4, 6-3.

Windies lose the sponsor

CRICINFO, undated

All through the precipitous decline of West Indies cricket, as so many of their supporters lost their faith, there was one source of unwavering support for the national team.

Now, even that has ended. After two decades of sponsoring West Indies cricket in the Caribbean, Cable and Wireless has decided that its money is better spent elsewhere.

Cable and Wireless made this announcement on Friday, after its latest three-year contract with the West Indies Cricket Board, worth 10 million dollars, expired. It said that it would now focus on the 2007 World Cup, which it is sponsoring.

It has also signed up nine leading West Indian players, including captain Brian Lara, for endorsements -- a sensible switch, for individual stardom lasts long after the team's lustre has dimmed.

Digicel, which sponsors the Caribbean Championship of soccer, is being tipped to take over the sponsorship of home series. The team's current sponsor on their tour of England is Sandals -- though they seem more likely to need galoshes there.

STRAWBERRIES & CREAM

WIMBLEDON

AFP, London

Wimbledon tennis diary for Sunday, the seventh day of the 2004 Championships:

Former Wimbledon champions Jimmy Connors and his former bitter rival John McEnroe are setting up a challenge against Pete Sampras and another player from the modern era in a million-dollar generation challenge.

The match will take place in Las Vegas early next year.

"I will need McEnroe to cover large parts of the court for me," said Connors, twice a champion here in 1974 and 1982.

OFFICIALS ESCAPE KANGAROO COURT

Wimbledon organisers, keen to shake off their stuffy image, are all for People's Sunday - even if it means putting up with an atmosphere usually associated with football terraces.

"I think there are things like large banners, claxons that won't

be allowed," said All England Club chief executive Chris Gorringer.

"I won't say kangaroos, because I know you write it down."

AMY HAS LESSONS TO LEARN

American veteran Amy Frazier, who knocked out French Open winner Anastasia Myskina in the second round, aims to make up for lost time when she finally quits tennis.

"I haven't even started college yet because I turned pro in high school," said the 31-year-old.

"I was going to go to UCLA but I will go to college when I retire. I still want to be a maths teacher."

GIVE US A SMILE, MARIA

Russian beauty Maria Sharapova believes her stony-faced appearance on court is one of her many weapons.

"I would smile on court but I just try to keep my concentration," said the 17-year-old. "I am an outgoing person but I don't really want to let my focus go. You know, sometimes I do want to smile, but then I think to myself: 'Maybe if you do smile, maybe your concentration will go off a little bit.' I don't want to let that happen."

stadium and the players are angry that the government offers them no help or patronage.

"The government does not sponsor any major tournament to encourage the local talent," said cricketer Mushtaq Ahmed.

"We have no coaches, no proper grounds. It is only our love for the game that keeps us going," he said.

Cricket needs an even pitch to avoid uneven bounce that can cause injuries, but in Kashmir the young and not-so-young play on any available surface.

"Every week we receive lot of cricket-related injuries," said Mohammed Akbar, an orthopaedic doctor at Srinagar's main hospital.

But like a people obsessed, the players don't let the risk of injury get in their way of having a good time outdoors on a Sunday.

"This game is driving people mad and they don't even care about being hit," said government employee Mohammed Yusuf, 47, who himself plays every week.

A nightmare

FROM PAGE 13

As the game entered a frenetic stage van Nistelrooy will probably never know how his angled shot from point blank range avoided its target on the hour mark, though the Swedes too had their bad luck as Larsson's fierce shot from six metres out in extra-time hit the bar with van der Sar beaten.

Bravo restricts

FROM PAGE 13

Harmison b Lawson 2  
Anderson not out 2  
Extras: (b-4, lb-5, nb-5, w-8) 22  
Total: (All out in 38.2 overs) 147

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-2, 3-84, 4-102, 5-104, 6-115, 7-118, 8-139, 9-145

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Bradshaw	10	3	32	2
Lawson	9	1	36	2
Bravo	10	2	26	3
Rampaul	6	0	34	2
Smith	3.2	1	10	1

WEST INDIES: Gayle, Chanderpaul, Smith, Sarwan, Lara, Bravo, Powell, Jacobs, Bradshaw,

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

41 Flag color

42 Moray, crime TV show

43 Edict

44 Where you get no makeup

45 Lubricant

46 Tackle-box item

47 Reed

48 Instrument

49 Someone standing by?

50 Give as an example

51 Energy

52 Lind-bergh, e.g.

53 Winners

54 Pack away

55 Feedback morsel

56 Drench

57 Friars

58 United nations

59 Ever-green

60 Hindu princess

61 Repentant

62 Appreciate

DOWN

1 "See ya!"

2 True-

3 Cabin

4 Makeup

5 Lubricant

6 Tackle-box item

7 Reed

8 Instrument

9 Someone standing by?

10 Give as an example

11 Energy

12 Lind-bergh, e.g.

13 Winners

14 Pack away

15 Feedback morsel

16 Drench

17 Friars

18 United nations

19 Ever-green

20 Hindu princess

21 Repentant

22 Appreciate

Solution time: 25 mins.

BRASAMSHERB  
LIPUNITARIA  
ACEPARAGRAPH  
BOXERREV  
PESOWELDS  
PARAMOURVORE  
UFOEATANCUE  
FLAIPARADIGM  
FREESTTAIL  
GASVIXEN  
PARAGHUTEERE  
AVEGOMITNOW  
DEFYEFEEASS