

DeFreitas quits Leics captaincy

Former England all-rounder Philip DeFreitas has stepped down as captain of county side Leicestershire, the club said Monday.

Andrews lift

FROM PAGE 13 Flintoff's 91-ball hundred came up in style with a six off Dwayne Smith.

Next ball he pulled the bowler disdainfully for another six.

Flintoff then lofted Gayle to the long-on boundary where he was 'caught' by Shivnarine Chanderpaul but the fielder stepped over the rope and so Flintoff had another six.

But next ball there was no doubt when his drives sailed over long-off.

Flintoff fell in the last over when he was caught off Gayle before Strauss's scampers took him to a 115 ball hundred with two sixes and eight fours.

Next ball he was out but in the last 10 overs England had scored 121 runs.

Bravo's 10 overs cost 80 runs and Dwayne Smith's 71 as the hosts plundered the change bowlers.

SCOREBOARD Table with columns for England and West Indies batsmen and bowlers.

Amal meets

FROM PAGE 13 Akhter advanced to the final defeating Priyanka 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Ranjan Ram beat Tazmul Islam 6-3, 6-2 and Anwar Hossain downed Delwar Hossain 6-2, 6-3 to enter the semifinals of the under-17 boys' singles competition.

The draw is scheduled for July 10 in Dhaka.

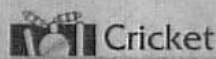
Big boost

FROM PAGE 13 excess of £10.9m over the next five years -- to cover the team at home and away.

Rival company Cable and Wireless, whose £5.45m three-year deal expired recently, declined to match the Digicel bid.

They are believed to have signed several leading players, including Lara, to personal sponsorship deals but the WICB denied there would be any conflict between the two.

Warne's mind game



AFP, Cairns

Shane Warne is doubtful he can seize his best opportunity and deprive Muttiah Muralitharan of his world Test wickets record, but he's certain he has the upper hand on the Sri Lanka batsmen heading into this week's second cricket Test.

The master Australian leg-spinner came out of the 149-run victory in last week's Darwin Test with three wickets to advance to 520 Test wickets -- just seven behind Murali.

Warne is trying to take full advantage of Muralitharan's absence from the tour in Australia's tropical north and claim the record.

"I probably needed to get a couple of wickets in that second innings (in Darwin) but unfortunately I didn't do that and Kasper (Michael Kasprorowicz) took seven wickets and bowled beautifully, that's the way it goes," Warne told reporters here on Tuesday.

"It was disappointing not to get a couple of wickets, I had an opportunity, but it's doubtful I'm going to take eight wickets given the history of this (Cairns) wicket, it generally suits the quicks a lot more than the spinners."

But ever-confident Warne knows that he has the ammunition to trouble the Sri Lankan batsmen and spoke of his dominance over them heading into Friday's second and final Test in Cairns.

"As far as bowling to them, I've done pretty well against all their top batters, their middle-order and the tail. I think I've definitely got the wood on the Sri Lankans, I think we've seen that over the last few series."

"I've come out in one innings (in Darwin) and got none for 61, I don't think that had any impact, they were just trying to survive. I don't mind bowling to the Sri Lankans."

Warne took 26 wickets in three Tests in Sri Lanka in March and believed he has the Sri Lankan batsmen in his pocket despite his wicketless return in the second innings in Darwin.

"To beat them 3-0 in Sri Lanka and 1-0 in Darwin in under three days, I've got 29 wickets in four Tests against them, so that's not a bad effort, so all of us are playing well."

"We know Sri Lanka's strengths and weaknesses and if we bowl to our plans and can execute them, then we can rock and roll them again cheap, but if we don't they have some dangerous players who can slog you out the park too."

Warne, who turns 35 in September and believes he only has two or three years left in the game, is pragmatic about taking the world record off the younger Murali.

"Being realistic this is probably my last chance. I don't think anyone's going to get a chance once Murali gets back playing or if he decides to play against anyone else, unless he's going to get heckled or whatever, I'm not sure where he's going to play next," Warne said.

"When he plays he just takes that many wickets, he gets seven or eight wickets a game so if he plays for another four or five years he's going to take another 400-500 wickets, so he'll be somewhere around 1,000 wickets."

"I think this is my last chance and hopefully the boys can hang on to a few and I can bowl well enough to get the wickets."

Argentina start tomorrow Bielsa's job cut out

REUTERS, Chiclayo

Beleaguered Argentina coach Marcelo Bielsa sees the Copa America as the ideal chance to blend together two generations of players.

"We're in a stage of transition and we hope this is moment to translate that into a competitive team," Bielsa, who has been attempting to rebuild Argentina after their shock first round exit at the 2002 World Cup, told a news conference on Monday.

He has been phasing in players such as strikers Cesar Delgado, Mariano Gonzalez and Carlos Tevez and midfielders Luis Gonzalez and Andres D'Alessandro to join what remains of the old guard, but it is proving a long and painful process.

Argentina were beaten 3-1 by Brazil and held 0-0 at home by Paraguay in their last two World Cup qualifiers, increasing the pressure on Bielsa, who many thought was lucky to keep his job after the World Cup.

The introverted, eccentric coach is regularly insulted by the Buenos Aires crowd at home matches.

"Playing well and winning is the only way to change this," said Bielsa, whose team open their campaign against Ecuador in group B on Wednesday.

Bielsa said pressure was part of the job and would not comment on speculation that he could be fired if his team did not do well in Peru.

"It's part of the coaching profession, as is the criticism and the lack of stability, although that being the case it's not a comfortable situation."

"We're at the start of a competition and there's a long path to travel along. Along the way, we will come across many situations but as I don't know what these will be and cannot predict them, I cannot comment on them at the moment."

Do it like Menotti

REUTERS, Chiclayo

Mexico coach Ricardo Lavolpe wants his side to play the stylish, attacking football favoured by his mentor Cesar Luis Menotti at the Copa America.

"Today, there are two styles of play," Lavolpe said on Monday.

"The team that takes the initiative, plays well and wins; and the other that plays on the counter attack."

"My style is more like Cesar Luis Menotti," said Lavolpe, who was reserve goalkeeper in Menotti's Argentina team which won the World Cup in 1978.

"Even if his teams lost, they played well and the stadium was always full."

Lavolpe is under increasing pressure to do well at the Copa America after an uninspiring run of results in friendlies, although his team sailed through their World Cup qualifying preliminary tie against Dominica last month, winning 18-0 on aggregate over two legs.

He insisted that Mexico, beaten finalists in Colombia three years ago, would attempt to win the tournament for the first time since they were invited to take part as guests in 1993.

"We're working to be among the contenders in this tournament, we're in a good frame of mind and we're going after our target, which is the Copa."

Mexico have brought a full-strength squad to the tournament, where they face Argentina, Uruguay and Ecuador in first round Group B.

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PLEASE DON'T ERUPT! The Misti volcano sits in the background as workers prepare the electronic board at the Monumental stadium in Arequipa, southern Peru on July 5.

Counting on shamans



REUTERS, Lima

Wearing a poncho and colored beads, Peruvian shaman Juan Osco told a bemused crowd of onlookers outside Lima's National Stadium.

But he and his six fellow shamans -- including some from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Bolivia -- had decided not to forecast the winner.

"We're not infallible," he said. "May the best team win."

World champions Brazil are obviously strong contenders and Osco said they were helped by their team colors -- yellow, representing spiritual strength, and green, the color of hope.

Though Peru "aren't looking so good, we have to unite the forces of all fans," he added, before hollering "oooooooooooo Peru."

"Whenever they do this, we lose," sighed Martin Suarez, 23, who was selling hats and shirts in Peru's red and white colors.

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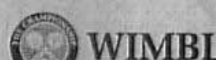
At one point Osco held shrunken head atop a pole to cast out negative energy and promote good values. Another shaman sported a gray fox fur and beat a drum; a third, wearing jungle designs, blew a conch shell.

Along with the soccer shirts and flags, the shamans laid out team pictures beside their other accoutrements: dried llama fetuses, skulls, a cross, feathers and coca leaves, which are considered sacred in the Andes.

Dubbed the "Shaman of the Andes," Osco urged the gods to smile on Peru during the tournament, which ends on July 25.

Despite the shamans' efforts, the number of tourists expected to attend the Copa this year is likely to be affected by recent violence in southern Peru and a general strike planned for next week.

Sharapova freezes Russia



REUTERS/AFP, Moscow

Move over, Anna Kournikova. Teenage sensation Maria Sharapova has replaced the glamour girl of tennis as Russia's newest sweetheart following her dream run to the Wimbledon title.

The Siberian blonde has become an instant hit back home, hailed as the country's biggest star, her picture gracing the front page of almost every national newspaper.

"Maria, Queen of England," exclaimed leading sports daily Sovetskoy Sport on Monday.

"Beautiful Masha. She became the first Russian to win the world's most prestigious tennis tournament," echoed the respected Kommersant.

"Russian tennis achieved its biggest success on Saturday," wrote the business daily in its front-page editorial, describing Sharapova's 6-1 6-4 demolition of twice-champion and former world number one Serena Williams in the final.

In only her second visit to Wimbledon, Sharapova became the third youngest champion in the event's 120-year history.

The Russian became the first 13th seed to win the title and only Monica Seles and Tracy Austin had won grand slam titles with less experience of top-flight tennis.

"Nobody bet on Maria but she won the super tournament as well as a million dollars," said popular tabloid Komsomolskaya Pravda.

But it was Sharapova's youthful exuberance, good looks and sex appeal that made her a crowd favourite at the All England Club and wildly popular back home.

Although she moved to the United States at the age of seven and speaks her native language with a distinct foreign accent, Russians have adopted Sharapova as truly one of their own.

During the fortnight, her fairy tale story has been rewritten and discussed by most newspapers and talk shows.

Russian tennis has blossomed in the last few years.

Marat Safin grabbed the 2000 US Open and inspired Russia to their first ever Davis Cup in 2002 to take up the trail paved by Yevgeny Kafelnikov who won the 1996 Roland Garros and 1999 Australian Open and the 2000 Sydney Olympic gold.

Tennis is still a young sport in Russia as during the Soviet era the game was branded as capitalist by the Communist Party.

It only blossomed after being picked up by Russia's first post-Soviet president Boris Yeltsin, a passionate fan of the game.

"The 17-year-old reached a success, which was a dream of generations of our tennis players, the Soviet Sport wrote, quoting Sharapova as saying: "Serena was my icon."

Maria Sharapova, the lowest ranked woman to win Wimbledon, followed Anastasia Myskina's French Open triumph in an all-Russian final for a Grand Slam breakthrough for Russia in women's tennis.

"Paris, London. Then the rest," screamed the front page headline of Izvestia over a photo of her kissing her Wimbledon trophy.

Sharapova's Wimbledon triumph has even helped lift the gloom among millions of Russian fans following the country's disappointing showing at Euro 2004.

"So what if England has Wayne Rooney," said Nikolai, 31, a kiosk venter in central Moscow, of the 18-year-old England striker, who became a real revelation in Portugal.

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Next comes Athens

REUTERS, London

With three Grand Slam titles, the world's top ranking and the millionaire lifestyle that status provides, Roger Federer can well afford to smile when he reflects on his career so far.

But his happiest memory of life in tennis so far is of something more noble than the trappings of stardom.

"Definitely staying in the Olympic Village," he says, his face lighting up.

"It was just the best thing. I stayed there in Sydney in 2000 and I am staying there again in Athens. I was asked if I wanted to stay there or outside in a hotel and it was no question."

Federer, who beat American Andy Roddick to win his second straight Wimbledon on Sunday, said his Olympic experience had been profound.

"I had such a great time in 2000, it is where I met my girlfriend. I have such great memories of it."

"I was staying with the wrestlers... I was on the second floor and they were on the first so I was safe from any attacks," he laughed.

"Just being there... hanging around with the other athletes... it's amazing. It is great to see the other side. Lots of these guys are amateurs, they do other jobs or their sport is not 12 months a year like tennis."

"To them I am something like a hero, I guess," he smiled, no trace of immodesty in his voice.

"They follow my progress around the world, in the newspapers and it is great to see how they are, to share with them... to see their sports."

"Last time I went to the swimming and the badminton. In Athens I want to see some athletics -- and maybe the wrestling."

A closer in the semifinals in Sydney, Federer has set his sights on winning Olympic gold in Athens.

"I lost in the semifinals and the bronze medal match (against Arnaud Di Pasquale of France) and it was very hard for me. I remember crying a lot after that," Federer said.

"This time I hope my girlfriend and I can celebrate our fourth anniversary with me getting a medal."

"I'm on the top of my game. I've never played as consistently as this for such a long period of time. If I can keep this up it will mean good things for me in the future."

A Burmese jackpot!

REUTERS, London

A mystery gambler who won 332,625 pounds (\$609,300) when Greece were crowned European champions on Sunday has been revealed as a 34-year-old Burmese businessman, not a Greek football fan.

The man placed a series of wagers with William Hill bookmakers in Woking, just outside London, starting with 4,000 pounds at 50-1 on June 23 and culminating with a 12,500 pounds bet on Sunday when Greece were a 9-4 chance to beat tournament hosts Portugal.

"He decided to back Greece rather than England after being impressed with the Greek defence in their early games," said William Hill spokesman Graham Sharpe.

"He is back at work today but I believe he is considering a holiday -- probably in Greece."

Greece, 80-1 outsiders at the start having never previously won a match at a major tournament, defeated Portugal 1-0 in the final thanks to a 57th-minute header from striker Angelos Charisteas.

Rooney offered 5-year deal

AFP, Liverpool

England sensation Wayne Rooney has been offered a five-year contract at his club Everton.

Toffee officials confirmed they have offered the 18-year-old striker the biggest contract in the Premiership club's history.

"We believe this is the right offer for Wayne - one which fully reflects his growing status within football," Everton chief executive Trevor Birch told the club's website.

Rooney scored four goals in Euro 2004 to announce his arrival on the world stage in style.

'Excuse me Mr Pauleta!'

AFP, Athens

Greek President Costis Stephanopoulos has scolded Portuguese striker Pauleta and French football legend Michel Platini for criticising Euro champions Greece's defensive tactics.

"I want to stress that there was some malice written in foreign newspapers, which came from some important people like the celebrated Platini or mister Pauleta, who asked himself if it was a pity for a team that plays defensively to become European champions," Stephanopoulos said during an official reception for the team and German coach Otto Rehhagel.

"Let's answer Mr. Pauleta and all the others who accuse the team of allegedly playing defensively, that whoever wins, wins, and whoever loses, loses -- let's be clear on that," the Greek President thundered.

"It is regrettable that a team that does nothing but defends ends up as European champion," striker Pauleta moaned after the tournament hosts lost 1-0 to Greece in Sunday's final.

"The team prevented the other sides' strikers from scoring. If this is a bad thing, or a sin, then it's the other teams who didn't play well," Stephanopoulos said.

"You played in a way that brought victory."

Rehhagel also defended his team, saying they played "controlled offensive."

"If the other teams had such great players, then they should have put five goals against us," said Rehhagel who believes the Greek team-spirit defeated their rivals.

"Ronaldinho is a great footballer, but on an individual level," the German coach said of Portugal's Manchester United winger.

Figo pissed him off

AFP, Lisbon

The Spanish man who invaded the pitch in the final minutes of the Euro 2004 final between Portugal and Greece on Sunday said he was motivated by lingering anger over Portuguese star Luis Figo's transfer from Barcelona to Madrid in 2000.

"I did it for fame, but with a cause. Figo is a sell-out," the 29-year-old from Barcelona who goes by the name "Jimmy Jump" told daily newspaper 24 Horas.

The man raced across the pitch at the Stadium of Light in Lisbon and threw a Barcelona scarf into Figo's face before he hurled himself against the back of the Portuguese net.

He was carried off the pitch by police and charged with public order offences.

A court in Lisbon on Monday released him without setting bail terms until a trial date is set, the newspaper said. Greece won the match 1-0.

The Spaniard has targeted other high-profile events before, most recently at the Spanish Grand Prix, according to the Internet page (www.jimmyjump.com) advertised on the black T-shirt he wore to the Euro final.

Figo has routinely faced protests by Barcelona fans since his 56 million dollar (46 million euro) then-world record transfer from Barcelona to arch-rivals Real Madrid four years ago.

A Russian journalist who jumped from the stands and ran half the length of the pitch at the same stadium during his side's first phase Euro 2004 match against Portugal was discharged after a Lisbon court handed him a reprimand.

Deco joins Barca

AFP, Barcelona

Portuguese midfielder star Deco has signed a four-year deal with Barcelona, the Primera Liga side confirmed on Monday.

The 26-year