

## Rofe joins Northants

AFP, London

Australian seamer Paul Rofe has joined Northamptonshire as a replacement overseas player for the final month of the season, the English county announced Wednesday.

South Australia pace bowler Rofe, 23, will join the club after Australia batsman Martin Love's one-month stint at Wantage Road ends in mid-August.

Love himself is deputising for Martin van Jaarsveld, who is due to tour Sri Lanka with South Africa.

Northamptonshire coach Kepler Wessels, the former Australia and South Africa batsman, said: "The thinking behind this is quite simple really."

"We have five championship matches after Martin Love leaves, we need to get some wins and to do that we have to take 20 wickets."

"Paul had a good season with the ball in Australian domestic cricket and so he comes with a useful pedigree."

Rofe, a former Australia Under-19s and Academy representative, claimed 36 wickets at 27.47 in ten matches during 2003-04, and was chosen for Australia A in their game against the Indian tourists.

In all first-class cricket he has taken 108 wickets at 28.98 to date, with a career-best bowling performance of seven for 52 and 13 wickets in the match for South Australia against New South Wales at Adelaide in January 2002.

Northamptonshire are currently bottom of the County Championship First Division table and are facing relegation to the second tier of English cricket's domestic first-class competition, having failed to win any of their nine games so far.

## US athletics still hopeful

AFP, Sacramento

There's a reason American athletics officials are confident of a strong Athens Olympic medal haul despite doping concerns and struggling veterans -- a new generation of rising youngsters.

In the shadow of an escalating doping scandal, older US stars are passing the baton to fresh faces and launching a new era at the United States Olympic Athletes' Trials, which resume here Thursday after two rest days.

"The younger runners are stepping up," said 1999 world 200m champion Inger Miller.

"It's about time there was a new wave come up. There have been one or two but there hasn't been a new wave since '94 when I came up."

Sprinters Justin Gatlin, Shawn Crawford and LaTasha Colander -- guided by reputed BALCO steroid scandal-linked coach Trevor Graham -- lead newcomers arriving as undetectable drugs and doping bring US performances into question.

"With all that has happened, controversy and scandal, the sport still survives," Miller said.

"And it always will."

Sydney Olympic five-medal hero Marion Jones is under doping suspicion and well shy of her best efforts, having failed to qualify to defend her 100m title with chances yet to come in the long jump and 200m.

Let's do it again

FROM PAGE 13  
Year's runners-up  
Mohammed Sporting Club, surprise package Sheikh Russel KC, Jhenidah Mohammedan, Unmochan Club of Bagerhat and Bangladesh Air Force.

Three teams will qualify in the six-team second phase final round to be held at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur.



Pakistan skipper Inzamamul Haq (L) and batsman Younus Youhana find something amusing as they relax during a practice session in Colombo yesterday.

## ZCU to abide by ICC

Cricket

AFP, London

World cricket's governing body said Wednesday its proposed method of resolving the Zimbabwe player dispute had been accepted by the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU) and it was now just waiting to hear from the rebel cricketers themselves.

In a statement issued ahead of a meeting with the players' legal representative Chris Venturas in London on Friday, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said the ZCU had agreed to a system that would see a three-person tribunal, sitting in Zimbabwe, resolve the impasse.

One member would be nominated by the ZCU, the other by the players, and the third, the chairman, by these two people.

The system, an alternative to its standard but lengthier disputes resolution process, has been specially devised by the ICC in a bid to end the crisis that has caused chaos in Zimbabwean cricket for several months.

In April the ZCU sacked then Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak after the fast bowler, now at English county Warwickshire, accused the

board of making some team selections based on race rather than merit.

When his colleague tried but failed to get Streak reinstated they went on strike in protest.

That led the ZCU to sack a total of 15 senior players, all white, a massive loss for a country with an already small pool of cricketers to choose from.

During ICC's executive board meeting, at its Lord's headquarters on June 30 the governing body told both the ZCU and the players they had 14 days to agree to their three-man arbitration system.

In its statement the ICC said that while the ZCU had now agreed, the players were asking for an extra month to make up their minds.

However, the statement made clear that officials were not prepared to wait much longer.

The ICC has advised the players of its strong preference to have this matter dealt with as quickly as possible and has expressed its reluctance to provide this extension which would leave these matters unresolved," the statement said.

"It has now asked the players to fast-track their decision on whether they will agree to this proposal to allow the matter to move to the next

stage."

The bulk of the rebels are currently in England where on Wednesday they were playing the first match of a six-game charity tour designed to raise money for the Zimbabwean Cricketers Fund and the Zimbabwean Pensions Fund.

Test batsman Stuart Carlisle, captain of the Red Lions, as the team is known, warned earlier Wednesday: "It would be difficult to resume a working relationship with the ZCU because they have done so much damage and that's why the solution to the dispute has to be effective."

"Some of the individuals in the ZCU that have helped cause the problems have to be booted out of cricket completely. The cancer must be cleansed. If that happens then I'm sure we can work together."

The ICC, at the same board meeting that devised the tribunal system, suspended Zimbabwe's Tests for the rest of the year following heavy defeats against Sri Lanka.

However their one-day internationals remained intact and England are due to play five such games in Zimbabwe in November.

Both innings saw Hoggard take two wickets in two balls.

A member of the pace attack that helped England to a 3-0 Test series win in the Caribbean earlier this year, Hoggard had been doubtful for this match and the tests that follow with a right knee injury.

But the 27-year-old swing bowler showed few ill effects on a day when 18 wickets fell in total.

By contrast, West Indies pace bowlers Fidel Edwards and Pedro Collins, who only flew into England on Friday to join up with the one-day squad that lost last weekend's NatWest Series final against New Zealand, had a far tougher day.

The duo returned combined figures of none for 115 from 22 overs.

Lara's men only have one more warm-up match, a three-day game against Sri Lanka A at Shenley starting Saturday, before the Test series gets underway on July 22.

Hoggard repeated the trick before the close when first innings centurion Devon Smith (three) was caught at mid-wicket for three by Koenig before Dwayne Smith fell lbw for nought.

First Jones's full length delivery had Collins lbw for two.

Then Hoggard, with the second new ball struck with the fifth and sixth deliveries of his opening over.

Omari Banks (16) edged a delivery and Thorpe took a superb catch away to his right at second slip. Then new batsman Lawson saw his off stump knocked out of the ground.

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They are coached by Robin Singh, who played 136 one-day internationals for India, the last as recently as 2001.

They believe they have a half a chance against Bangladesh, who have only won once in the last five years.

"Playing cricket for your country, be it your country of adoption, is a big thing," said skipper Rahul Sharma.

Their 14-man squad includes there are seven Pakistani-born players, two Indians, a Nepalese national, two British, one Australian and one Chinese.

The UAE won three of their five matches at the ICC Six Nations Challenge earlier this year and are relatively strong in batting with a line-up headed by Syed Maqsood, Khurram Khan and Asim Saeed.

The UAE and Hong Kong are expected to bow out after the first round, leaving India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh to contest the super league.

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.

## WI take good lead

Cricket

AFP, Arundel

England fast bowler Matthew Hoggard produced a heartening display ahead of next week's first Test against the West Indies with a flurry of wickets for MCC as the tourists faltered on the second day of three here Wednesday.

At stumps the West Indies were 115 for five in their second innings, a lead of 235 after they had lost five wickets for 50 runs.

Opener Chris Gayle was 60 not out with his captain Brian Lara, who made 113 in the first innings before retiring hurt with flu, unbeaten on 34.

Earlier West Indies, who resumed on 373 for six, were bowled out for 380 in their first innings with Yorkshire quick Hoggard taking four for 32.

But first change Jermaine Jackson and the tourists final three first innings wickets in the space of nine balls.

pacer Dwayne Smith, with a late burst of three for four, gave West Indies a first innings lead of 120.

A cold day and sluggish wicket made life far from ideal for the tourists who then saw their batsmen struggle against a moving ball.

Earlier Hoggard and fellow England fast bowler Simon Jones claimed the tourists final three first innings wickets in the space of nine balls.

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## CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer



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## Blignaut in for Akhtar

AFP, London

Zimbabwean all-rounder Andy Blignaut on Thursday joined English county Durham on a one-month contract, the club said.

Blignaut, 25, one of 15 white rebel Zimbabwe players stood down by the Zimbabwe Cricket Union (ZCU), effectively replaces paceman Shoaib Akhtar, who is on international duty with Pakistan in the Asia Cup.

Blignaut had played 15 Tests and 47 one-day internationals before the rebels' dispute with the Zimbabwe Cricket Union began.

## BKSP reunion on Sept 10

SPORTS REPORTER

The Alumni Association of BKSP (AAB) has fixed September 10, 2004 as the date for the yearly reunion of former students of Bangladesh Kririshik Prothisthan.

To prepare for the programme, a special meeting has been convened at the gymnasium of Dhaka University on Friday, July 23 at 3:30pm. All ex-students of the BKSP are welcome to attend the meeting. For more information, interested persons can call the following mobile phone numbers: 0171845012, 0171456378, 0175008912 and 0171456292.

Penalties for the use of a stimulant range from a public warning and loss of results to a two-year ban.

She was to face a US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) hearing next Monday.

Edwards faces