

Morale boosting win for Windies

CRICINFO, undated

West Indies on Saturday completed a remarkable turnaround in their tour match against Derbyshire with a thumping 315-run win on the third and last day of their final match before next week's third Test against England.

After Carlton Baugh and Ridley Jacobs increased the West Indians' total to 368 to 6 declared in the morning, Fidel Edwards then took 5 for 22 to blow Derbyshire away for only 88.

Baugh, resuming at 110 not out, progressed to 150 before the declaration, and he added a further 72 runs in the morning with Jacobs, who ended on 59 not out.

Ramnaresh Sarwan, the acting West Indian captain, called the batsmen in shortly before lunchtime, leaving Derbyshire 404 to win, but more realistically, needing two sessions to bat out the draw.

But things didn't quite go to plan as they crashed to 16 for 5, thanks to Edwards, and to two run outs.

Andrew Gait was the first of Edwards' victims, lbw for 2, and Hassan Adnan soon fell in the same fashion for 6. James Bryant was caught by Baugh off Edwards for 2, and add to that the two run outs of Stephen Stubbings and Steven Selwood, and Deryshire were already staring down the barrel.

Sutton was the last man to fall, to Edwards for 27, and that completed a much-needed morale booster for West Indies ahead of the third Test at Old Trafford next Thursday.

Earlier, on the second day it was also Edwards who led the tourists' revival as he took five for 61 in a much improved display.

Edwards helped restore some pride following a lacklustre first day that saw West Indies bowled out for a modest 223.

Commentary calling Raja

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan Cricket Board chief executive Rameez Raja resigned Saturday, saying he wanted to pursue full-time his commitments as a cricket commentator.

Raja, 41, a former Pakistan cricket captain, was appointed chief executive of the PCB in July 2003 and he was often criticised in the media for doing professional commentary alongside his honorary job.

PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan said he had accepted Raja's resignation and relieved him to devote himself to commentary, cricket officials said.

"Due to excessive commitments in the season ahead I thought it would be appropriate to leave the post for someone who could do the job full-time," Raja told AFP.

Raja is currently in Colombo doing commentary on the South Africa-Sri Lanka cricket Test match.

Afridi returns to Pak team



AFP, Karachi

Pakistan Saturday recalled popular all-rounder Shahid Afridi for a 14-man squad for the tri-series in the Netherlands this month and the ICC (International Cricket Council) Champions trophy in September, cricket officials said.

"We have recalled Afridi because of his experience and for the need of a leg spinner in the team, who can also bat," chief selector Wasim Bari told AFP.

The enigmatic 24-year-old, who holds the record for the fastest one-day century in just 37 balls against Sri Lanka in Kenya in 1997, played the last of his 176 limited overs internationals against India in March this year but was left out of the Pakistan Asia Cup squad last month.

"We had two choices either to

select off-spinning all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez or Afridi, but since we have Shoaib Malik, who also bowls off-spin, we preferred Afridi," he said.

Opener Imran Nazir and leg-spinner Danish Kaneria were omitted from the Pakistan side which featured in the Asia Cup in Sri Lanka last month.

Also included in the team is left handed opener Salman Butt, who played his only Test against Bangladesh in Multan last year.

TEAM Inzamamul Haq (captain), Yousuf Youhana (vice-captain), Imran Farhat, Salman Butt, Yasir Hameed, Younis Khan, Shoaib Malik, Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razaq, Moin Khan (wicketkeeper), Mohammad Sami, Shoaib Akhtar, Shabbir Ahmed, Rana Navedul Hassan.

Coach: Bob Woolmer, Haroon Rasheed (manager), Murray Stevenson (trainer).

Eng want 2nd spinner?



AFP, London

England, despite winning the first two Tests against West Indies by margins of over 200 runs each, could be tempted to add a second spinner to their squad when they announce their party Sunday for next week's third match in the four-game series at Old Trafford.

Pitches at the Lancashire headquarters ground have been taking turn all season.

England left-arm spinner Ashley Giles has had a major impact in the series so far, taking 18 wickets, but the hosts could yet call up either Gareth Batty or fellow off-spinner Richard Dawson.

Worcestershire's Batty marked his call-up Friday into England's 14-man squad for next month's ICC Champions Trophy one-day tournament in England by scoring his maiden first-class century against Surrey at The Oval.

He is the favourite to come in if the selectors decide they need an extra specialist slow bowler.

As well as his abilities with the ball, Batty is also a battling batsman and

aggressive fielder -- an area where England, despite their dominance in the current series, have been found wanting on occasion.

Yorkshire's Dawson impressed on England's last Ashes tour of Australia in 2002-03 but has not played international cricket since making the last of his seven Test appearances in Sydney more than a year ago.

Otherwise England face few selection dilemmas which is hardly surprising considering they have won eight of their last nine Tests and all five on home soil so far this season.

Surrey left-hander Mark Butcher, England's regular No.3, has missed the last two Tests with first whiplash sustained during a car accident and then a recurrence of a thigh problem.

His place was taken by Kent's Robert Key who cashed in at the second Test at Lord's with a maiden Test hundred which he converted into a double century.

Butcher is aiming to make a return for Surrey in Monday's Totesport League match against Hampshire at the Rosebowl and will be consulted by the selectors about his fitness before they announce the squad.

Tendulkar happy to be with them

PTI, Mumbai

Sachin Tendulkar on Friday said he was happy to be placed alongside legendary boxer Mohammad Ali. England football captain David Beckham and French mid-fielder Zinedine Zidane as a brand ambassador for a sports company.

"It is a great feeling as my association with Adidas has been there since six years. They are a great team to work with and I am truly honoured to be associated with greats like Ali, Beckham, Zidane and others," Tendulkar told reporters here.

Pittman's Olympic dream over

REUTERS, Zurich

World 400 metres hurdles champion Jana Pittman has been ruled out of the Olympic Games after tearing cartilage in her knee while warming up for the Zurich Golden League meeting.

Australian Pittman pulled out after suffering a knee injury before her race at the Letzigrund and a series of examinations by doctors revealed the 21-year-old had torn a part of the cartilage in her knee.

Zurich organisers said she would undergo arthroscopic surgery to repair the tear, and such injuries usually rule out any form of physical exercise or strain on the knee for at least two to three months.

"The injury Jana Pittman contracted when warming up has been diagnosed as a torn outer meniscus," a statement from the organisers said on Friday.

"Pittman will have to undergo arthroscopic surgery."

Pittman became 400 metres hurdles world champion when she beat American Sandra Glover in Paris last August but then failed to win another international race until the start of July in Croatia.

Figo at the double

FROM PAGE 13

This was fourth straight defeat for Bagerhat Unmochan Club.

Yellow cards: Akram and Shipon (Jhenaidah Mohammedan).

TEAMS

JHENIDAH MOHAMMEDAN: Piaru, Biplob, Ashrafal, Kachi, Hafizur, Binoy (Khalid) (Mohsin), Imrul (Dilip), Kollol, Alif, Mithu and Yusuf.

Referee: Abdur Rakib.

Asian joy for Japan

FROM PAGE 13

Li Jinyu's header from a looping Li Ming cross sailed over Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi's bar.

They dominated for the first 20 minutes as Japan sat back and soaked up the pressure, awaiting their chance, which they took in the 22nd minute.

Despite the intimidating atmosphere, it was a spirited performance from Zico's men who came to the tournament decimated by injuries and club commitments.

The likes of Hidetoshi Nakata, Shinji Ono, Naohiro Takahara and Junichi Inamoto played no part, leaving a makeshift Japanese team to show again that they remain the heavyweights of Asian football.

'We're not chokers'

FROM PAGE 13

But on the flip side, India have made the final in every tournament, involving three or more teams, they have played since the ICC Champions Trophy in Nairobi in 2000.

"The way we've played in one-day cricket over the last few years, we deserve to win a few finals," Ganguly said. "We definitely need to remedy that record."

India next play a tri-series involving Pakistan and Australia in the Netherlands later this month. They then play three one-dayers against England and the 12-team Champions Trophy in September.

Shooting in anger

FROM PAGE 13

international events, they failed when it came to Olympic qualifiers.

"They don't do well anyway because they are not competing in their favourite sports," explains Fatemeh Abolghasemi, a consultant in the Iranian women's sports federation.

"What they look for is a means to travel abroad." "But even when they go abroad, they can hardly match their personal bests because they feel out of place and nervous because of their conspicuous attire," she added.

Facing such hurdles, the favoured Iranian women's sport is now apparently martial arts.

"Women are exploited and considered inferior, so they feel the need to learn self defence and feel secure in a male-dominated society," said Fatemeh Sotodeh, a former karate fighter and advisor to the women's sporting federation.

Iranian athletes have in the past won 32 Olympic medals: 23 in wrestling, eight in weightlifting and one in taekwondo. But no Iranian women have ever stood on the Olympics podium, admits women's sports federation president Zahra Ahmadipour.

PREVIEW: FA Community Shield It starts in Cardiff



AFP, London

Anyone expecting a gentle friendly when Arsenal and Manchester United meet in Sunday's Community Shield match at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium is in for a shock.

Billed as the curtain raiser to the English Premiership season, the annual fixture between the league champions and FA Cup holders is often a less than memorable contest.

But when the arch-rivals contested last year's Community Shield the match was an explosive affair.

Then Arsenal striker Francis Jeffers was sent off for kicking United's Phil Neville and Arsenal full-back Ashley Cole was lucky to stay on the field after lashing out at Ole Gunnar Solskjaer.

They were just two of several contentious incidents in a match United won on penalties after a 1-1 draw.

However, it was Arsenal who went on to enjoy an unbeaten league season as they finished an astonishing 15 points clear of the Old Trafford team who ended the campaign a disappointing third with the consolation of lifting the FA Cup.

Trailing Arsenal is a situation United boss Sir Alex Ferguson will not tolerate for long and everything from the Scot's

simmering feud with counterpart Arsene Wenger down suggests another passionate encounter on Sunday.

United, however, were dealt a huge blow when Ruud van Nistelrooy was ruled out for a month Thursday because of a hernia problem.

The Dutch striker, United's top scorer last season, will undergo surgery next week in a bid to cure the problem.

Van Nistelrooy's absence does however, offer the likes of Louis Saha, Solskjaer, Diego Forlan and new signing Alan Smith a chance to claim a place as the starting striker.

Smith arrived from relegated Leeds, whose fans have gloried in a mutual hatred with United that dates back to the 1960s.

And the fiery England forward admitted winning over supporters at his new club would not be easy.

"I know it is a difficult situation for the fans because I used to play for a club they do not like.

"But anyone who has any doubts about me will soon realise I am 100 per cent committed to Manchester United."

United were heavily criticised for fielding second-string sides during their recent tour of the United States and then saw Thursday's friendly at Old Trafford against Japanese side Urawa Red Diamonds abandoned because of the threat of thunder and lightning.

Midfielder Darren Fletcher -- due to

start Thursday's match -- has not made a single pre-season appearance while Paul Scholes, who decided this week to retire from international football, has only been on the field for an hour, against AC Milan, following his return from Euro 2004.

Not that it has been plain sailing for Arsenal either. Their pre-season has been overshadowed by persistent rumours that talismanic French midfielder Patrick Vieira is set to leave Highbury for Real Madrid.

Despite the fact that Real failed to sign the 28-year-old World Cup-winner before the Champions League third qualifying round deadline, the Spanish giants' interest in Vieira shows little sign of decreasing.

But Arsenal winger Fredrik Ljungberg has insisted that, contrary to some reports, he has no plans to leave Highbury for Italy's Serie A.

He told the club's official website www.arsenal.com: "I don't know where these stories about me leaving Arsenal have come from.

"I enjoy playing football here. I have never had a conversation with the boss at any time about wanting to leave the club and, at the moment, I am just focusing on the start of the new season."

Wenger has already signed 20-year-old French midfielder Mathieu Flamini, although Marseille has insisted the player is duty bound to stay with them.

Bundesliga Late Werder show



AFP, Berlin

Champions Werder Bremen were indebted to a late goal from Paraguayan substitute Nelson Haedo Valdez as they started the defence of their Bundesliga crown with a 1-0 win over Schalke 04 here Friday.

The opening match of the 2004/05

However, both were ineffective in the first period.

Ailton almost broke clear in the 32nd minute but a lofted through pass hit him on the back allowing the Bremen rearguard to regroup.

Four minutes before half-time Bremen goalkeeper Andreas Reinke appeared to forget that Ailton was no longer a Werder player as he raced out to show again that there appeared little danger, allowing Ailton to pick up the

But despite Schalke's pressure it was Bremen who took the spoils with Valdez reacting to a knockdown from Frenchman Valerien Ismael in the 83th minute to poke home.

"It was really disappointing to lose like that," said Ailton.

"Conceding late on really hurts as we played really well."

Valdez had only been on the field nine minutes after replacing debutant Klose.



Werder Bremen's Paraguayan international Nelson Haedo Valdez celebrates after scoring against Schalke 04 during their opening Bundesliga match in Bremen on August 6.

Bundesliga season was delayed by 70 minutes because of a power cut at the Weserstadion and it seemed to throw both teams out of their stride in a disappointing first half.

It was billed as a duel between Schalke's Brazilian striker Ailton -- who inspired Bremen to last year's title -- and his five-million-euro replacement, German international Miroslav Klose.

ball by the touchline.

However last season's top-scorer drifted a job wide of the post to spare Reinke's blushes.

Another former Bremen man Mladen Krstajic had a golden opportunity to open the scoring in the second half but his final touch let him down as Reinke whipped the ball off his toe in the penalty area.

"Miro can do better but overall it was a good start," explained Bremen coach Thomas Schaaf.

"But I am delighted for Nelson and it has shown how much strength in depth we have in attack."

Bremen thrashed Hertha Berlin 3-0 in their opening match last season and will hope this victory can inspire them to another campaign full of silverware.

FOOTBALL BRIEFS

AFP, Madrid

France star Zinedine Zidane has been given the green light to play in Real Madrid's Champions League preliminary round match in Poland next week after recovering from a foot injury he picked up in a friendly against Tokyo Verdy last weekend.

Zidane was forced to leave the field during last Sunday's 4-0 thrashing of the Japanese side with a bloodied left foot after Verdy's Kentaro Hayashi stamped on him.

But the 32-year-old midfielder is fit for Real Madrid's Champions League tie against Wisla Krakow on August 11, the Spanish giants confirmed on their website.

"He trained as normal with his teammates," an statement said. "Apart from the medical report Zizou's presence in Krakow is guaranteed except if there is a last minute glitch."

MUTU'S JUVENTUS DEAL COLLAPSES

AFP, London

Chelsea striker Adrian Mutu will stay at

Stamford Bridge after his proposed move to Juventus fell through, the BBC reported Friday.

The 25-year-old Romanian was set to move to Italy on a season-long loan deal but will now stay at Premiership runners-up Chelsea.

Mutu joined the Blues from Italian club Parma 12 months ago for 15.8 million pounds (29 million dollars) and enjoyed a successful start to his career in the Premiership.

DEL NERI SACKED AS PORTO COACH

AFP, Lisbon

Luigi Del Neri has been ousted as manager of FC Porto just two months after taking over at the Portuguese side, the reigning European champions.

The club said in a statement Saturday that they and Neri had agreed late Friday to terminate his three-year contract "for personal reasons."

The 53-year-old Del Neri had been four years in charge of Italian side Cheivo before joining FC Porto in June following the departure of the highly successful Jose Mourinho to Chelsea.

The Portuguese champions won the European title in May defeating French side Monaco 3-0 in the final.

According to sports daily A Bola, FC Porto president Jorge Pinto da Costa had lost patience with the Italian after he failed to return on time to Portugal from some time off back home in Italy.

ROONEY TO MISS WC GAMES

AFP, London

Teenage striker Wayne Rooney looks certain to lose his battle to be fit in time for England's opening two World Cup qualifiers next month.

The Everton striker broke a bone in his foot playing for his country at the Euro 2004 finals in Portugal in June, a tournament which saw him arrive as a star on the world stage.

He has been recovering well, but will not be able to resume even light training for another fortnight.

That will leave him insufficient time to get match-fit before the crucial qualifiers matches against Austria and Poland on September 4 and 8.

Maradona needs president's help

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Desperate to return to Cuba after a major health scare, soccer great Diego Maradona wants Argentine President Nestor Kirchner to help free him from a psychiatric clinic where he is being held against his will for drug addiction.

"He wants to go to Cuba but the courts won't let him," his doctor Alfredo Cahé told Radio 10 on Friday. "He wants me to talk with the President so he sees the extent of his recovery and what he is capable of doing when asked."

Maradona's family forced him to enter a private clinic on the outskirts of Buenos Aires in May for cocaine addiction treatment after he was rushed to intensive care in April with a swollen heart and breathing problems.

Maradona, 43, has spent much of the past four years undergoing a drugs rehabilitation programme at a spa in Cuba, which he considers a second home. He is less enamoured with the Argentine clinic he is currently trapped in.

"In this clinic one person thinks they are Napoleon, another thinks he is (liberation hero) General San Martin ... And they don't believe I'm Maradona," the former World Cup winner told relatives during a recent visit, according to local sports daily Ole. President Kirchner's office was non-committal, saying no formal request had yet been received from the former World Cup winner -- considered one of the most gifted players in the history of soccer.

Ligue 1 Elber on target for Lyon

AFP, Nice

Brazilian ace Giovane Elber gave three-time champions Lyon a perfect start to the 2004-2005 French season with a second-half goal which finally broke the side's two-decade search for an opening day victory.

A 1-0 win at Nice was the first successful season opener for the defending champions since 1981 and proved that Paul Le Guen's side are up for the challenge of a record-equaling fourth consecutive title, despite losing a host of players in the close season.

Cash problems had forced the champions to part with key players like Vikash Dhorasoo, Peguy Luinyndula, Eric Carriere and Edmilson, but Le Guen did well to hold on to Elber who had been mulling a move back to Germany.

And the visitors took advantage of a howling mistake by Nice captain Jose Cobos late in the second half after the defender, in a bid to clear, headed the ball into the path of the Brazilian who volleyed into the net on 77 minutes.

Lyon, who were in the second division between 1983 and 1989, have had a 16-match drought of opening day winners.

Marseille and Saint Etienne are the only sides to have achieved the feat of four titles in a row.

Last season's UEFA Cup finalists Marseille are set to be one of Lyon's biggest rivals during the 2004-2005 campaign despite selling striker Didier Drogba to Chelsea.

Agassi meets Roddick in semifinal

AFP, Cincinnati

Andre Agassi will have a chance to show he's truly back at the top of his game Saturday at the 2.4 million-dollar Masters Series here when he faces defending champion Andy Roddick in a dream semifinal.

The 11th-seeded Agassi reached his fourth semifinal of the year on Friday with a 7-6, 6-3 quarterfinal victory over Carlos Moya of Spain.

The second-seeded Roddick trailed Tommy Haas 3-1 in the first set of their quarterfinal, but rallied quickly to close the door on the German in a 6-3, 6-3 victory.

The 34-year-old Agassi, seemingly rejuvenated after a spell spent nursing sporadic hip inflammation, holds a 4-1 career edge over Roddick, who is 13 years his junior.

"I'm excited - it's always fun," Roddick said of playing Agassi. "He's proven everyone wrong again this week. He's hitting the ball great again, and I'll have my hands full trying to beat him."

Roddick had his serve broken for the first time in the tournament, in the third game of the first set, but his 11 aces and 24 winners ruled the 68-minute match.

The quarterfinal win gave Roddick his 25th victory in 27 matches since June.

No trainer

FROM PAGE 13

with Zimbabwe Cricket Board. "He returned here midway through the Under-19 tour to settle the financial matters and join his new job soon."

With Woodford's departure, Bangladesh are left with no specialist physical trainer. Last week, Cordy suddenly fell sick and left for Australia for treatment.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words.

Cryptogram puzzle with grid and clues for words like 'CRYPTOQUIP' and 'YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUIP'.