

ICC okays late replacements

REUTERS, London

England, Pakistan and South Africa have been allowed to replace injured players in their Champions Trophy squads, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Saturday.

England have included all-rounder Alex Wharf in place of seamer Kabir Ali, while Pakistan have replaced Shabbir Ahmed with pace bowler Azhar Mahmood.

South Africa have also brought Charl Langeveldt into the squad in place of Andre Nel.

The 12-team ICC Champions Trophy takes place in England and starts next Friday, with each team playing at least two matches.

Flying Dutchmen

REUTERS, Utrecht

The Netherlands won an easy but unimpressive 3-0 victory against Liechtenstein on Friday in a warm up match ahead of their opening 2006 World Cup qualifier against the Czech Republic next week.

New Dutch coach Marco van Basten tested two newcomers - Khalid Boulahrouz and Romano Denneboom - in his squad, which missed its complete defence due to injury.

Defence midfielder Mark van Bommel opened the scoring for the Dutch in the 23rd minute from a perfect cross by Dave van den Bergh.

Andre Ooijer notched a second goal 11 minutes after the half time and Denny Landzaat fired the third.

The depleted Liechtenstein side, missing key players, including goalkeeper Peter Jehle and midfielder Franz Burgmeier, broke the Dutch defence several times but failed to score.

Roddick roars

FROM PAGE 13 came through 6-4, 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 to set up a third-round meeting with Brazilian qualifier Ricardo Mello.

Eighth seed Nalbandian became the second-highest seed to go out when he was beaten in five sets by Russian Mikhail Youzhny.

Elsewhere, Serena Williams, Amelie Mauresmo and Jennifer Capriati maintained order in the women's event by reaching the fourth round.

Third seed Williams opened the evening session in slightly more modest fashion than in her opening two matches, with the yellow-low-cut shorts of French 16-year-old Tatiana Golovin putting the American in the shade.

Williams's game was also far from shining as she made 42 unforced errors, having to dig deep to come from 4-1 down in the first set on her way to a 7-5, 6-4 victory.

"Nearly 50 unforced errors in two sets, that's virtually giving away a set," said Williams, who now plays 15th seed Patty Schnyder.

"I was going for far too much. There were shots that I really should have made. I was playing two opponents, her and myself."

Second seed Mauresmo stormed into the fourth round with a 6-2, 6-0 demolition of Venezuela's Maria Vento-Kabchi.

Open TT

SPORTS REPORTER

The first Sharp Blade Open Table Tennis Competition got underway yesterday with the men's and women's seeded singles being decided on the day at the Woodenfloor gymnasium.

Shibul of North South University (NSU) clinched the men's title inflicting a 11-9, 11-3, 11-9 defeat on his university-mate Mashrul.

It was another all NSU final in the women's event with Sanjeeda winning the title, beating Ishrat 11-3, 11-6, 5-11, 11-7.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 28 Split up 28 Split up
1 Morse 30 Legend-morsel
4 Recede peeper
7 Prince 33 Western Charles' capital
pastime 36 Heavy
8 Waffle hammer
enhancer 37 "Love Story"
(Var.) author
10 Estimate Segal
11 Put on a pedestal 38 More
13 Eastern craftly
capital 39 Trig
16 Favorite function
17 Makes a statement 40 Bygone speedster
18 Shooter 41 Drunkard
ammo 12 Phobia
19 Wharf 14 Designer
20 Highland 1 Uncer- house- tainly
hold Laurent

DOWN 15 Nebr. neighbor
19 Thick-ness
20 Sam
21 Great wares
21 Lakes
22 Pastoral poetry
23 Gambling game
24 Suit-ability
25 Scrooge's reaction
26 Circus staffer
28 Griffith and Williams
29 Actress Debra
30 Contam-inate
31 Never again?
32 Jonng preceder
34 Lam- preys
35 Small combo

Solution time: 21 mins.

ACROSS: 28 CRAW, 30 PIP, SEAS, AURA, ESE, PUTT, STIR, KANGAROO, SHAMING, ARMO, TIGER, ARMO, YACHT, BUGABOO, ALIA, FIX, URN, KERCHOOG, HASTE, REX, SAD, AMOUR, SKIDDOO, WHIT, ALGID, USA, WHITE, ADIA, GULI, LESIS, PAL, EGOS



WHERE ARE THE FOREIGNERS? Angry Mohammedan fans hang a banner to protest the club officials' failure to hire foreign players during the Nitto-Tata National Football League match against their Chittagong cousins at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

ICC cautions Bari

Cricket

AFP, London

Pakistan chairman of selectors Wasim Bari has been warned by the International Cricket Council (ICC) as to his future conduct after his criticism of umpire David Shepherd.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed also told Bari that while he would not face disciplinary action on this occasion, the global governing body was determined to close a loophole in its regulations that had seen him escape punishment for his "unacceptable behaviour".

Bari slammed experienced English official Shepherd's performance during Pakistan's 17-run defeat against Australia in the triangular final in Amstelveen, Holland, last Saturday.

He called for the 63-year-old to retire after he judged Pakistan captain Inzamamul Haq caught behind and Yousof Youhana caught bat-pad, two key decisions in a tight game.

"Shepherd's umpiring decisions were like target killing and cost Pakistan the final. It's time for the inaccurate Shepherd to retire," former wicketkeeper and Pakistan captain Bari told AFP in Karachi last Sunday.

But in a copy of a "confidential"

letter dated September 3 from Speed to Bari, seen by AFP in London, the Australian makes clear the ICC's anger at his comments.

Speed, who labelled Bari's remarks "inflammatory" and told him he was "out of order", referred to clause 2.4 of the ICC's Code of Conduct which makes it an offence to pass "public criticism or inappropriate comment on a match related incident or match official".

Punishments for breaking this clause are the equivalent of between 50 percent of the player or official's match fee up to their full match fee and/or a one Test match or two one-day international match-ban.

"You will be aware that a number of players and team officials have been charged under this clause in recent years," Speed wrote.

He added the clause made no specific mention of selectors but stressed: "It is my view that it is strongly arguable that it is sufficiently wide to encompass a selector and, in particular, the chairman of selectors of a Member country."

"I understand that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) proposes to charge you under its own code of conduct in relation to the comments that you made about umpire Shepherd."

"Please note that the ICC chief executive has a wide power and a clear duty to lay charges under the

Code of Conduct where it is appropriate.

"I have given careful consideration to this matter and have decided in this case to not lay a charge against you."

"I have done this for two reasons. First, as a matter of fairness to you, there is some doubt about whether the definition of team official is wide enough to encompass a selector."

"I will address this immediately and ask the ICC Board to include selectors as a specific category of officials so that you and other selectors can be in no doubt about where you stand."

"Secondly, I am assured that the PCB has taken appropriate action under its code of conduct to deal with your unacceptable behaviour."

"Wasim, please rest assured that any future public criticism of ICC officials by you while you are chairman of selectors for the PCB will be dealt with very firmly under the ICC Code of Conduct."

"You have been in and around the game long enough to know that you were well and truly out of order in making these comments."

And in a further sign of the ICC's determination to back umpires Shepherd was standing as scheduled at Lord's on Saturday in Pakistan's one-day international against Australia, whereas previously Bari's remarks might have led to his withdrawal.

Real budget

AFP, Madrid

Spanish giants Real Madrid on Friday unveiled their largest ever budget of 300 million euros (361 million dollars) for the just-opened 2004-2005 season, up from 232 million a year ago.

Unveiling the figures on their official website, Real, whose budget has shot up since the 2002-2003 figure of 192.6 million euros, said it had last season made ordinary profits of 38 million euros, adding 33 million in extraordinary receipts.

The figures include the anticipated extra payments to the tune of 63 million euros of transfer fees for the likes of England skipper David Beckham, bought from Manchester United a year ago for 40 million euros, and new Argentine signing Walter Samuel, who cost 25 million from AS Roma.

Overall, the club posted a profit for last season of six million euros with global marketing on the back of the Beckham signing playing a major role, that transfer having seen sales of merchandise rocket, particularly in Asia.

Marketing brought in 85 million euros last season and this season is set to be worth 137 million euros of total anticipated revenue of 300 million euros, a twofold increase in just three seasons.

Big brothers

FROM PAGE 13 know how far we can go without any foreign player," said the former national right back.

His sentiment was also expressed in the stands where a section of Black and White fans displayed a giant banner that read: "We want the removal of inefficient Mohammedan officials for failing to bring foreign players."

While there were mixed feelings in the Mohammedan camp, Chittagong coach Nazrul Islam said that the better team won. He also dismissed rumours of match-fixing.

"There were whisperings about the match result but I can assure you that we played our best. I think Nakib's two goals in the second half made the difference," he said.

Yellow card: Titoo (Ctg Mohammedan).

TEAMS MOHAMMEDAN SC: Tareq, Jewel Rana, Faisal Ahmed, Shuvro, Kaiser (Raju), Sentu, Pappu (Anwar), Amin Rana (Riyad), Faisal Mahmud, Manju and Nakib.

CHITTAGONG MOHAMMEDAN: Titoo, Dulal, Apu, Nejmait, Prodip, Sanwar, Arman, Zahid, Pavel (Ridon), Yousof and Rafael (Noor Hossain).

Referee: Abdur Rakib.

Vaughan not worried

Cricket

AFP, London

England captain Michael Vaughan maintained his latest one-day batting failure was not preying on his mind and insisted he was just an innings away from finding his form.

Vaughan's team will be going for a 3-0 clean sweep at Lord's on Sunday in the final match of their NatWest Challenge one-day series against India.

But while Vaughan has overseen crushing wins by seven wickets at Trent Bridge on Wednesday and 70 runs at The Oval on Friday, his personal contributions with the bat have been nought and four.

That means he has scored a meagre 51 runs in his last seven one-day internationals.

"I feel good and I'm driving for that score," Vaughan said after the Oval victory.

"I just try to keep doing what I have been doing and not change my game from Test match cricket to one-day cricket," added Vaughan, who has led England to a run of seven straight Test wins -- their best sequence in 75 years.

"Hopefully, sooner rather than later it will happen. I've not got enough runs yet to find my form."

"All I can do is keep going. I got a good ball on Wednesday and strangely down the legside today (Friday)."

The India series has been a warm-up for the ICC Champions Trophy, the mini World Cup, which gets underway in England next week.

But Vaughan insisted that despite having an unbeatable 2-0 lead, England would not deliberately rest players for Sunday's match.

"We'll pick a team to win. It will be the best 11 players out of the squad of 14 to beat India at Lord's."

England's latest one-day victory was built on a blistering 99 from Andrew Flintoff, the cornerstone commanding total of 307 for five.

The hard-hitting Lancashire batsman, who has been enjoying a purple patch in both Test and one-day cricket this season, faced just 93 balls with four sixes and nine fours.

Together with Paul Collingwood (79 not out) Flintoff shared an England fifth-wicket one-day record stand of 174 that revived the team from the depths of 105 for four.

"Flintoff is a big player. He's playing as well as anyone in the world," added Vaughan who also hailed the crowd favourite's disciplined pace bowling.

"He's bowling very straight and is our most experienced one-day bowler behind Darren Gough."

It is only in the last 12 months that Flintoff has converted his undoubted natural talent into consistent, quality performances at the highest level.

Vaughan said the turning point had been his performances in the 2003 home Test series against South Africa where he followed up an entertaining century at Lord's with a match-turning 95 in England's series-leveilling win at The Oval.

"He got a hundred at Lord's in a dead game and then a 95 at The Oval which must have given him a huge amount of confidence. The game depended on him getting those runs and since then he's been our most consistent batsman."

Flintoff, 26, who made his Test debut back in 1998, put his success down to increased self-knowledge.

"I am more confident and I play my game a lot better, the way I play

and I am a bit more mature on and off the pitch."

India captain Sourav Ganguly, once a Lancashire teammate of Flintoff's and whose side are the co-holders of the Champions Trophy along with Sri Lanka, said: "These were an important three games for us, and we wanted to win the NatWest Challenge."

"It would have helped us get ready for the Champions Trophy. But Flintoff played very well. He always had the talent -- I could see that when I was at Lancashire -- but he has improved immensely."

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the second one-day international between England and India at The Oval on Friday: ENGLAND: 307 for 5 (Flintoff 99, Collingwood 79 not out, Solanki 48: Harbhajan 2-14, Sehwaag 2-51)

INDIA

Ganguly run out	7
Sehwag lbw b Gough	0
Laxman c C'Wood b Giles	33
Kaif c Vaughan b Giles	51
Dravid c Jones b Wharf	1
Yuvraj c Vaughan b Gough	24
Gavaskar b Giles	13
Agarkar c Trescottick b Gough	22
Pathan c Vaughan b Gough	0
Harbhajan not out	41
Balaji b Flintoff	18
Extras: (lb-11, w-11, nb-5)	27
Total: (All out in 46.3 overs)	237
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-10, 3-99, 4-102, 5-113, 6-143, 7-169, 8-169, 9-173	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Gough	10	0	50	4
Harrison	8	0	51	0
Flintoff	7.3	1	31	1
Wharf	6	0	36	1
Giles	10	1	26	3
Vaughan	5	0	32	0

Result: England won by 30 runs. Man-of-the-match: Andrew Flintoff.

S OPEN DIAR

AFP, New York

Shikha Uberoi had met two-time US Open champion Venus Williams prior to their second round match on Thursday at the US Open. They were unable to board the same flight at a Florida airport when all planes were grounded the day of the September 11 terror attacks. Williams rented a car and drove Uberoi and her younger sister Neha home. Uberoi treated Williams to a traditional Indian meal. Williams beat Uberoi 7-5, 6-1 to advance to the third round.

AGASSI MARCHES ON

American veteran Andre Agassi silenced any rumours that he would retire at the close of the US Open. After beating Germany's Florian Mayer on Thursday, the 34-year-old Agassi said: "Let this be a signal that I'm not retiring at the end of this tournament. Let that be a big flare."

RUSSIAN WAVE STAYS STRONG

The rise of young female Russian players is reaching new heights. There are eight Russian seeded athletes in the 128-player women's draw at the US Open. Five of the top 10 ranked women players in the world are Russian and 15 are ranked in the top 100.

"Perhaps never before have we seen such a meteoric rise from one group of players from the same country," Larry Scott, chief executive of the WTA Tour said.



COMICAL RUNNING: India's captain Sourav Ganguly (L) collides with VVS Laxman, resulting in the former being run out in the second one-day international against England at The Oval on Friday.

Rooney will buy his time

Football

AFP, Manchester

Wayne Rooney believes he may have to wait until next season to celebrate Premiership title glory with Manchester United.

The 18-year-old England striker, who moved to Old Trafford for 27 million pounds (40 million euros) from Everton on Tuesday, hinted that after a start to the season which sees Alex Ferguson's side ninth in the table and seven points adrift of the top two, the title might be beyond them this season.

"We've got some good young players at the club and providing we can all grow together in the team, I think we'll eventually come good again," the teenager told the club's website, www.manutd.com.

"It's a big challenge for us and we might not win the league this season; it might take two or three years. But I really think we're capable of matching both Arsenal and Chelsea."

Rooney will have to wait for his debut as he is still suffering from a broken bone in his foot, a legacy of his sensational performances at Euro 2004.

"Going out to Portugal was a big experience for me and after doing as well as did out there, I felt that I had moved my game on and I wanted to be playing in the Champions League," said Rooney.

"I think it will be a different type of challenge and a difficult one too because you'll be up against the top players in Europe."

"But that's what every player relishes; they want to challenge

themselves and play against the best players, and hopefully we can go out there and win it."

Rooney has come under intense scrutiny in recent weeks with various legal allegations involving his private life keeping large sections of the tabloid press busy.

But he believes his is still maturing as a player and a person.

"I think I've changed a lot as a person on the field and off the field," he said.

"I'm much more mature than I was 12 to 18 months ago, but that all comes with playing the game."

"Hopefully I can keep my head down, do my job well and go out and do my best for Manchester United. He (Ferguson) has worked with a lot of young players over the years and he's always got the best out of those players."

"Hopefully he can get a lot more and the best out of me over the next few years."

The prospect of linking up with the likes of Ruud van Nistelrooy, Roy Keane, Ryan Giggs and Paul Scholes is one which excites Rooney, and he is confident he can learn from them too.

"I'm very excited," he said.

"There's a really good squad of players here who are all top players. I hope I can get as quickly as possible and become one of those players as well."

Scots hold Spain

REUTERS, Valencia

Spain were fortunate to scramble a 1-1 draw at home to Scotland on Friday in a friendly international that was abandoned after an hour because of a floodlight failure and a waterlogged pitch.

Skipper Raul netted from the penalty spot 12 minutes into the second half to cancel out a first half own goal from midfielder Ruben Baraja, but the game came to a sudden halt three minutes later because of a power cut.

Torrential rain continued to fall during the ensuing 30-minute delay and match officials decided to call the game off because the pitch had become unplayable.

Spain had flattered to deceive in the opening exchanges, but were increasingly unable to cope with a determined and ambitious Scotland.

Sachin ruled out

FROM PAGE 13 England on September 10. India play their opening game the following day against Kenya.

Gavaskar, son of legendary former Indian opener Sunil, was originally picked for only the Netherlands tournament and the England series.

Tendulkar's absence would be a big blow to India, who had been expecting the master batsman to be fit for the Champions Trophy.

India are already trailing 2-0 in the three-match series against England without Tendulkar, the highest scorer in the shorter version of the game with 13,415 runs from 339 matches with 37 centuries.

India have been placed in Pool C along with Pakistan and Kenya. The pool winners will qualify for the semifinals.

Symonds rallies Aussies

FROM PAGE 13 second rescue mission against Pakistan. At Johannesburg last year Australia were 86 for four when Symonds came to the crease and unleashed his whirlwind century.

But he should have been out Saturday when Rana Naveed, sliding in on his knees from long-on, failed to hold a catch off Malik.

But four balls later the bowler ran out Darren Lehmann (nine), backing-up, when after fielding a Symonds drive his back-flick throw hit the stumps.

Clarke went when his skied hook off Akhtar was well caught at mid-on by Malik before Symonds' cut to third man off the same bowler was dropped by Yousof Youhana.

Symonds then hooked the first ball off the last over, from Akhtar, for six and two balls later stepped outside his leg-stump to cut a four to go to 99 before a two took him to his hundred.

In 1999 Australia beat Pakistan at Lord's by eight wickets to win the World Cup Final and when the teams met at the ground two years later, Australia enjoyed a nine-wicket win in the NatWest triangular final.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Australian innings in the one-day international against Pakistan at Lord's on Saturday:

AUSTRALIA					
Hayden b Afridi	52				
Haddin c Malik b Sami	13				
Ponting lbw b Sami	4				
Martyn c Farhat b Malik	26				
Symonds not out	104				
Lehmann run out (Malik)	9				
Clarke c Malik b Akhtar	31				
Watson not out	7				
Extras: (lb-9, w-12, nb-2)	23				
Total: (For 6 wks in 50 overs)	269				
Fall of wickets: 1-19, 2-30, 3-99, 4-109, 5-148, 6-236					
Did not bat: Gillespie, Kaspruwicz, Lee					

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Sami	10	1	56	2
Naved	9	0	46	0
Akhtar	8	0	70	1
Razzaq	4	0	12	0
Malik	10	0	36	1
Afridi	9	0	40	1

PAKISTAN: Hameed, Farhat, Inzamam, Youhana, Moin, Malik, Razzaq, Afridi, Akhtar, Sami, Naved Total: Pakistan.

Umpires: Steve Bucknor (West Indies) and