

# Gibbs on journey of discovery



BBC ONLINE, London

South African opener Herschelle Gibbs says he is working hard at getting back into form for the Champions Trophy.

The opener has had a poor run as South Africa have lost 10 one-day internationals on the trot.

"I think I've gone to look for balls to play and maybe my shot selection hasn't been that good," he told this website.

"I've had a good look at myself and analysed the last year's happenings. Maybe I haven't taken enough responsibility for my wicket."

On his day there is no doubt that Gibbs is one of the most dazzling talents in world cricket.

In 154 one-day internationals he has scored 4, 815 runs at an average of 33.90, with a strike rate of 81.27.

He also has 12 hundreds but has not reached three figures since his

143 against New Zealand at the World Cup in February 2003.

Since an unbeaten 93 against Zimbabwe in Cardiff in July 2003, Gibbs has passed 50 just once in 22 innings, and his poor form has mirrored an appalling run by South



HERSCHELLE GIBBS

Africa.

Despite having a powerful side on paper they have managed to lose their last 10 matches on the trot.

Gibbs says that he has to take a share of the responsibility for the

poor run.

"You've got to look at the core of the team," he said.

"If there is a problem you always look at the experienced players.

"I can only speak for my own performance and I haven't performed very well over the past year or so.

"I've got to get things going up front and set the platform for the innings."

An instinctive player by nature, Gibbs has nevertheless taken time to analyse why he has been failing to score big runs.

"If I think of the hundreds I've scored I've really just gone about the beginning part of my innings with normal cricket," he said.

"I always picked up the momentum later on in the innings."

And despite his poor run Gibbs is adamant that it is not because he is not fully committed to the South African cause.

"Playing international cricket is a huge privilege and the hunger has always been there," he said.

"I've maybe just confused myself a little bit, but I think I've sorted out my approach now."



PHOTO: AFP

TAKE ME HOME! Diego Maradona waits for a car as he leaves the psychiatric hospital in Ituzaingo, in the outskirts of Buenos Aires on September 9. Maradona has put off his travel to Cuba where he is to pursue treatment for his longstanding cocaine addiction. Maradona's ex-wife and daughters were trying to ensure that he stayed in Argentina whereas the legendary footballer wanted to return to Cuba where he had lived since 2000.

## India suffer

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both of whom had successful A tours recently.

They face Kenya in their first match at the Rose Bowl, Southampton on Saturday and also play Pakistan at Edgbaston on September 19.

Balaji will be replaced by medium-pacer Amit Bhandari.

Bhandari, 25, has grabbed five wickets in his two one-day internationals for India but has an economy rate of six runs an over. He last played against Zimbabwe in Perth in February.

## Dravid a team

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found form with 90 in the last match before the ICC Champions Trophy, a title the side currently share with Sri Lanka.

"Our form hasn't been as good as we would have liked but the match at Lord's gave us a lift so we are very positive," Dravid added.

He have spoken about our batting, had a few meetings with the batsmen and it's about people getting back to basics.

"It was nice to see Sourav get a few runs and I got a few."

With Pakistan India's main rivals for a place in the semifinals, Dravid left no doubt that the side's main focus is on meeting their arch-rivals at Edgbaston on Friday.

"With this game against Kenya and another practice game hopefully our batsmen will get into rhythm for the closing stages," he added.

"With the format the tournament is almost like a knockout and on a good day we can beat anybody.

"So we just need to put together three or four good days."

## USA bashed

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field, Astle and Styris steadied the Black Caps, the partnership reaching 100 stand off 107 balls.

Styris was caught by Aijaz Ali when he lofted a delivery from Staple to long-on.

The USA skipper then had two wickets for two runs in seven balls when next man Chris Cairns was caught for three at long leg by sub Donovan Blake.

Astle reached his century off 137 deliveries as the bowling became woefully slack towards the end of the innings.

Despite conceding 27 off the 47th over, Howard Johnson yoked McMillan on 25, but television umpire Darrell Hair correctly called a no-ball as Johnson had overstepped his crease.

SCOREBOARD  
Scoreboard in the ICC Champions Trophy Pool A match between New Zealand and United States at The Oval on Friday:

NEW ZEALAND  
Fleming c Romero b Reid 15  
Astle not out 145  
Marshall c Desai b Romero 11  
Styris c Aijaz b Staple 75  
Lambert c sub (Blake) b Staple 3  
C McMillan not out 64  
Extras: (lb-10, w-21, nb-3) 34  
Total: (For four wkts in 50 overs) 347  
Did not bat: J.Oram, B.McCullum, C.Harris, D.Vettori, D.Tuffey.  
Fall of wkts: 1-25, 2-43, 3-206, 4-211

Bowler O M R W  
Johnson 7 1 43 0  
Reid 10 0 37 1  
Romero 4 0 52 1  
Lambert 10 0 66 0  
Rashid Zia 9 1 63 0  
Staple 10 0 76 2

UNITED STATES: M.Johnson, R.Alexander, L.Romero, S.Massiah, R.Staple, C.Lambert, C.Reid, J.Desai, Aijaz Ali, Rashid Zia, H.Johnson.

Toss: United States of America  
Umpires: B Doctrove (WI) and D Shepherd  
TV Umpire: D Hair (Aus)  
Match Referee: M Procter (SA)

## Beckham's mega Gillette contract

AFP, Madrid

England football captain David Beckham has signed a 50-million-euro, five-year contract with US company Gillette, sports newspaper AS reported on Friday.

According to AS, Beckham is the highest paid sportsman in Europe thanks to publicity and marketing contracts which will have earned him 34 million euros in 2004, five times his salary at Real Madrid.

## Savage complains of brutality!

AFP, Cardiff

Controversial Wales midfielder Robbie Savage has admitted he is on the verge of quitting international football after being sent-off in his side's 2-2 draw with Northern Ireland on Wednesday.

"I'm seriously considering my international future," the Birmingham player said.

Savage was sent off after just 10 minutes for retaliating to Michael Hughes' wild lung and he accused his opponent, who was also dismissed, of deliberately trying to hurt him.

"A tackle like that is a disgrace. He was trying to break my legs," Savage told the BBC.

"But I'm bigger and better than him and always will be. I got up after the tackle but I didn't even raise my hands. I was the normal reaction of anybody. I'm fiery and that's what I get paid for.

"Then I got pushed over again, so to get sent off I couldn't believe it. But it's not about me, it's about the team."

Northern Ireland striker David Healy was also red-carded for overdoing his goal celebrations that gave his side a 2-0 lead.

## Wright's spin

FROM PAGE 13  
For former New Zealand batsman Wright, then recently-installed as India coach, the impression Harbhajan made was instant.

"We were looking for spinners and Kumble was injured. Anil and I had a look at 10 or 12 spinners in Chennai and that was the first time I had seen him (Harbhajan) at close quarters," said Wright.

"He got bounce and lots of turn. When you see someone like that, well you just don't see who can bounce it and turn it like that. He got his line right and his confidence grew from that.

"The thing about Harbhajan is that he is a vicious competitor and that's what I love about both Kumble and Harbhajan."

But Wright, whose side also face arch-rivals Pakistan in Pool C, added there were ways in which the duo differed.

"Anil's a great technician, extremely determined and a wonderful professional. In everything he does he is a great role model for all youngsters.

"Harbhajan is younger, he probably shows his emotions a lot more. It will be good for us to have both of them bowling together."

"They are world-class bowlers especially in any conditions where spin is prevalent and they enjoy bowling together."

## Preview: Serie A

# A three-horse race

## Football

AFP, Rome

Inter Milan coach Roberto Mancini believes the club's lavish summer signings will enable them to mount a serious challenge for the Serie A title this season.

The new campaign gets underway on Saturday with title-holders AC Milan at home to newly-promoted Livorno, back in the top flight after a 55-year absence, while Inter face a tricky away trip to Chievo.

Inter lured Mancini from Lazio this summer after finishing a massive 23 points behind the champions and with the financial muscle of wealthy owner Massimo Moratti has been busy strengthening his squad over the last two months.

The former Italy international has brought in Dutch hardman Edgar Davids, mercurial Argentinian Juan Sebastian Veron and speedy Brazilian wing-back Jose Ze Maria from relegated Perugia to broaden his midfield options.

Mancini also raided his former club, persuading experienced defenders Giuseppe Favalli and Serbian Sinisa Mihajlovic to leave the capital and head north to join the Inter revolution.

Having eclipsed city rivals Milan in the transfer market, Mancini believes the perennial underachievers are now ready to challenge for the Scudetto which they last won in

1989.

"Inter are on the same level as Milan," said the 39-year-old, Serie A's youngest coach.

"The difference between us and them is that we have changed a lot, while Milan haven't and I'm confi-

## CHAMPIONS OF THE LAST DECADE

Last 10 winners of the Italian league title:

2004 - AC Milan  
2003 - Juventus  
2002 - Juventus  
2001 - Roma  
2000 - Lazio  
1999 - AC Milan  
1998 - Juventus  
1997 - Juventus  
1996 - AC Milan  
1995 - Juventus

dent we will have something to say in the race for the title.

"Inter have always had a talented squad, but they have had problems coping with the weight of expectation, especially when you consider the amount of money the club has spent in the past.

"But I believe we have made some excellent additions to the squad and if we play to our potential, I see no reason why we shouldn't be successful. We can make life difficult for Milan."

AC Milan have been relatively

## Preview: Primera Liga

# It's a tough life

## Football

AFP, Madrid

Spanish international midfielder Ruben Baraja won the league title with Valencia last season and earned his corn as much as anyone in the whole of La Liga, playing an unrivalled 64 matches for club and country.

He paid the price at Euro 2004 as Spain flopped in the opening phase and this week led calls for the number of matches to be trimmed back.

The call came just as Real Madrid's England pair David Beckham and Michael Owen prepared to come back from international duty for their fifth match in two weeks - Saturday's second league match of the new campaign against modest Numancia.

Beckham and Owen, along with the likes of clubmate Raul, slogged through World Cup qualifying double headers with their national squads last weekend and in mid-week and before that Real met Mexican side Las Pumas in a prestige friendly.

Prior to that, Real had to go through the final round of Champions League qualifying. Having already fitted in a truncated Asian tour which followed hot on the heels of Euro 2004 itself, a tournament during which Beckham has since explained he had nothing left in the tank.

"They are really clogging up the calendar," said Baraja ahead of Spain's World Cup qualifier in Bosnia.

"The calendar is atrocious with regard to the amount of games and competitions that there are to slog through," said Baraja, adding it was becoming "impossible to give 100 percent" all of the time.

"In the end they (the game's

authorities) are going to kill football," warned Baraja, who has crammed nine games into a 21-day period, including the European and Spanish Super Cups and internationals.

Valencia teammate Roberto Ayala has also suffered after an almost non-stop schedule which included the Copa America and the Olympics with Argentina and now faces eight weeks out after knee surgery.

Barcelona are another top club with similar problems with the likes of Ronaldinho facing a lengthy programme of Brazilian World Cup qualifiers on the other side of the globe.

One solution is a bigger squad, a road down which Real are going this season after capturing Owen to add to a forward line already containing Ronaldo and Raul as well as Fernando Morientes, recalled from his loan period at Monaco.

Raul has been under pressure in the media after a poor season with Real and Spain but his talismanic quality means both club coach Jose Antonio Camacho and national incumbent Luis Aragones have kept faith with the record goalscorer in the Champions League.

The player himself says a true professional just gets on with the job and proves his worth.

"When you are a professional at elite level you are in the eye of the storm for good or bad," said Raul, hoping the sun comes back out soon with Owen and Morientes straining at the leash.

As Real, seeking to benefit from the decisions by Luis Figo and Zinedine Zidane to quit the international game, seek to roll over Numancia, Claudio Ranieri's Valencia have a tough assignment at Athletic Bilbao.

Valencia, taking an increasingly Italian shape under the Tinkerman,

quiet in the transfer market, but their midfield dynamo Andrea Pirlo believes that could work in their favour.

"We have been together a long time and there is an excellent team spirit here," said the Italy international, who played for the Italian Olympic team which came back from Athens with a bronze medal.

"That isn't something that develops overnight, it takes time. Teams like Inter and Juventus have bought good players, but they will need time to adapt and get used to their new surroundings."

On Sunday, last season's runners-up Roma face newly-promoted Fiorentina at the Olympic stadium, while Juventus, champions in 2002 and 2003 and now coached by Fabio Capello, visit Brescia.

Capello left Roma to fill the gap left by Marcello Lippi, who replaced Giovanni Trapattoni as coach of the Italian national team after Euro 2004.

## FIXTURES

(Kick off 1300 GMT unless stated)  
Saturday: Chievo v Inter Milan (1600 GMT), AC Milan v Livorno (1830 GMT)  
Sunday: Atalanta v Lecce, Brescia v Juventus, Cagliari v Bologna, Palermo v Siena, Parma v Messina, Reggina v Udinese, Roma v Fiorentina, Sampdoria v Lazio (1830 GMT)

started out with an unspectacular 2-1 home win over Villarreal but Bilbao's San Mames stadium is far from the easiest place to bank full points.

Barcelona, also playing Saturday, take on a Seville side which began with a narrow win over Albacete but which should not trouble a rejuvenated Catalan club at the Nou Camp.

Barca swamped Santander away in their opener with new boys Ludovic Giuly and Samuel Eto'o hitting the target.

Frank Rijkaard's men started badly last term and ended up storming to second place.

This time they are determined not to repeat old errors, which included an early home draw with Seville.

"We messed up last time in the first half of the season, especially at home. You need a good home record to win the league and we were missing that last time," admitted midfielder Xavi Hernandez.

On Sunday, Champions League participants Deportivo La Coruna host Osasuna, Atletico Madrid - still firmly in Real's shadow - travel to Albacete, Villarreal take on Real Sociedad, Betis meet Barca city rivals Espanyol, Malaga take on Zaragoza, Getafe face Mallorca and Levante face Santander.

## FIXTURES

Saturday: Real Madrid v Numancia, Athletic Bilbao v Valencia, Barcelona v Seville  
Sunday: Albacete v Atletico Madrid, Deportivo La Coruna v Osasuna, Villarreal v Real Sociedad, Real Betis v Espanyol, Malaga v Real Zaragoza, Getafe v Real Mallorca, Levante v Racing Santander

## Preview: Premier League

# Work cut out for MU

## Football

AFP, London

Alex Ferguson will turn to Argentinian defender Gabriel Heinze in an effort to solve a Manchester United injury crisis which is threatening to blow a huge hole in the Old Trafford's giants' title chase.

Heinze, 26, hasn't kicked a ball for his new club since signing from Paris Saint Germain in the summer and has infuriated Ferguson by playing for Argentina in the Copa America and then in the Olympics where he helped his country win gold.

He then went back to South America to play a World Cup qualifier against Peru last weekend.

But he is in line to make his United debut in Saturday's Premiership clash at Bolton as United look to recover from a miserable start to the season.

They languish in ninth place in the table already seven points behind bitter rivals Arsenal and Chelsea who occupy the top two spots with perfect records.

Ferguson is already without John O'Shea while Gary Neville and Louis Saha both limped out of midweek World Cup qualifiers. Wes Brown is still sidelined while Rio Ferdinand's eight-month suspension still has a week to run.

"My situation isn't easy," said Heinze.

"United's directors are a bit annoyed, but I always did what I felt was correct and United will be proud to have a gold medal winner in the squad."

"Some people say I did the right thing, others say I didn't. But I'm never going to say 'no' to Argentina."

"I want to respond to what has happened through my efforts on the pitch. I'm going to show I can shine in the Premiership. I can't wait to play for United."

Champions Arsenal go to London rivals Fulham who have never beaten the Gunners in six attempts in the top flight - the best they have to show was a draw in last season's Highbury encounter.

Furthermore, Arsenal haven't lost a Premiership London derby since November 2001 - a run of 25 games without defeat against other capital clubs.

Sol Campbell and Jeremie Aliadiere are still unavailable but, aside from that duo, coach Arsene Wenger's squad has a clean bill of health ahead of the trip to Craven Cottage.

"Some players have come back more tired than others from World Cup duty because of the travelling involved," said Wenger.

"For example, Edu and Gilberto

were in Brazil for a game against Bolivia and then flew to Germany for a friendly. But they are OK.

"The signs are good for the start of a season, we are not complaining."

Chelsea, who along with Arsenal and United, kick-off their Champions League campaigns next week, travel to Aston Villa for a lunchtime kick-off where Colombian striker Juan Pablo Angel will be looking to become the Londoners' bogey-man for the second time in nine months.

Last season he scored the goal which put Chelsea out of the League Cup.

Saturday's most intriguing clash will be at St James's Park where Newcastle will face Blackburn having just tempted coach Graeme Souness to leave Lancashire for the north-east.

## FIXTURES

Saturday: Aston Villa v Chelsea (1245 GMT), Bolton v Manchester Utd, Fulham v Arsenal, Liverpool v West Brom, Man City v Everton, Middlesbrough v Birmingham, Newcastle v Blackburn, Portsmouth v Crystal Palace (1615 GMT)  
Sunday: Tottenham v Norwich (1505 GMT)  
Monday: Charlton v Southampton (1900 GMT)

WHIZZ KID

OMPETITION 21

Tick the correct answers, post

The Daily Star

Competition closes at 8 pm  
Sept 17, 2004 and draw shortly afterwards

1. Who won the first gold medal in the Athens Olympics?	Galkina	Devers
Du		
2. Who became Asia Cup cricket champs?	India	Pakistan
3. Who clinched the Cincinnati Masters tennis title?	Federer	Henman
4. Who lifted the 25th nat'l hockey crown?	Usha	MSC
Army	Bangladesh	
Name		
Class		Roll No
School Address		
Phone: (If any)		