

Nasir loses

SPORTS REPORTER
FIDE Master Sheikh Nasir Ahmed went down against International Master Alexander Veingold of Estonia in the fourth round game of the Calvia Open Chess Festival in Spain on Thursday.

Butcher back to Caribbean

BBC ONLINE, undated
Former Middlesex and England batsman Roland Butcher has accepted a two-year post at the University of West Indies (UWI).

He has been appointed Director of Sports at the Cave Hill campus in Barbados, the island where he was born. Butcher made his Middlesex debut in 1974 after moving to England when he was 14 and went on to score more than 12,000 runs, including 17 centuries.

Hopkins to join NZ squad in Australia

CRICINFO, undated
Gareth Hopkins, the wicketkeeper from Otago, has been picked to play in New Zealand's opening game of their Australian tour.

New Zealand start their month-long tour with a game against New South Wales starting next Thursday and Hopkins' inclusion means that Brendon McCullum would get an opportunity to rest.

McCullum was the only specialist wicketkeeper on New Zealand's tour of Bangladesh and had an excellent series with the bat, scoring his maiden Test century at Dhaka.



Did U Know?

The first ball of the World Cup was bowled by Madan Lal of India in the 1975 World Cup.

Whizz KID- 217 winner

Scionara Shehry
Please produce your ID card and an attested passport size photograph while collecting the winner's prize from the Sports Desk of The Daily Star at 7:30 pm on November 20.

Whizz Kid-217 correct answers

- 1. West Indies defeated England in the ICC Champions Trophy final by 2 wickets.
2. Who won the China Open tennis title? Ans. Serena.
3. How many times was Pavel Nedved capped before announcing his retirement? Ans. 83.
4. Who became man-of-the-tournament in the ICC Champions Trophy? Ans. Sarwan.
5. Who clinched the AKTEL school basketball girls' crown? [Ans. Sunbeams]

Whizz KID- 216 winner



Neger Sultana
(Bangladesh Rifles School, Dhaka)

Roddick, Henman tumble

Tennis
REUTERS, Paris

Top seed Andy Roddick and holder Tim Henman, their minds perhaps on next week's Masters Cup, bowed out of the Paris Masters in the third round on Thursday.

Ponting criticises pitch

FROM PAGE 13
Little batsmen could do on a track like this," Ponting said. India crumbled for 104 in their first innings and managed 205 in their second while Australia scored 203 and 93, their lowest score ever in India, as off-spinner Harbhajan Singh grabbed his 14th five-wicket haul in his 39th Test.

Michael Clarke was Australia's unlikely bowling hero, using his occasional left-arm spin to take six wickets for nine runs to run through the Indian lower order.

"I don't need to say much about a track where someone like Clarke can take six wickets in no time," Ponting said.

Former Indian captain Polly Umrigar, who prepared the Wankhede Stadium strip, defended the work done by his groundstaff.

"I do not care what others say, my verdict is that the batsmen did not apply themselves," said Umrigar, a renowned Test batsman of the 1960s.

"The wicket was not as difficult as it is being made out to be. Batsmen willing to play shots got ample opportunities."

When India and Australia last played a Test at the Wankhede Stadium in 2001, the match also lasted three days. But it was the fast bowlers who did most of the damage in Australia's 10-wicket win.

Indian captain Rahul Dravid -- leading because of a groin strain to Sourav Ganguly -- agreed with his Australian counterpart but said it had still been a great match. And he hailed an "unbelievable" performance by his team.

"It was not a good series for us, but at least we salvaged something from it at the end.

"It makes me feel much better. Everyone contributed to the win. The spinners did their job well, but I think it was the 91-run stand between Sachin (Tendulkar) and (Venkatesh) Laxman in the second innings that gave us something to defend.

"We would have liked 150 but the way the guys bowled, fielded and took the catches was absolutely brilliant."

"We've lost the series but we can take a lot of heart from this," said Dravid.

Five-star Aftab

FROM PAGE 13
was an instruction and I wanted to bowl on a good line to check runs. I never thought I would do anything like this," said an elated Aftab who surpassed Tapash Baisya's 4-16, the previous best bowling figures for the Tigers.

Adjudged man-of-the-match for his fantastic effort, Aftab revealed that it was the first time ever that he was bowling in Dhaka.

"I have never even bowled in any club match here but I bowl in Chittagong. Dav (coach Whatmore) noticed me bowling in the nets during the ICC Champions Trophy and inspired me to take it seriously. I think from now on I'll try to prepare myself more as an all-rounder," said Aftab.

Whatmore was also delighted with the bowling feat of the teenager.

"Aftab pleased me. I have been encouraging him for the past few weeks about bowling but I am really surprised that he got five wickets. The way he took the challenge was really inspiring for the team," said the Australian.

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"Chelsea are extremely disappointed with this verdict. We believe it is far too lenient and sends out the wrong message about drugs in football."

"It is also indicative of a lack of direction within the FA at this time," added Kenyon in a reference to the governing body being without a chief executive.

"As a club we can only take the action that we believe is right for Chelsea."

"However, the FA have a much wider responsibility to look after the interests of the game as a whole and, in this case, we believe it has shown itself to be weak over the issue of drugs."

But the FA's stance was backed by Professional Footballers Association (PFA) chief executive Gordon Taylor who has been critical of Chelsea's drugs policy.

"Adrian admitted the charge from the beginning and accepted his responsibility."

"He is sorry for the problems that have been caused and he very soon wants to restore his good name in the international football world and particularly in his homeland of Romania."

"He is now looking forward to getting his career back on track into top-class football after next May."

Mutu, the 25-year-old Romania captain, saw his ban backdated to the period already served under an interim suspension order beginning on October 25. His ban will now run until May 18, 2005 with the FA requesting FIFA, world football's governing body, to make the ban global.

Chelsea chief executive Peter Kenyon accused the Football Association (FA) of being "weak on drugs" after the club's former striker Adrian Mutu was banned for seven months for failing a dope test.

Mutu tested positive for cocaine, a banned substance, in September although he later denied that was the drug involved.

He was also fined 20,000 pounds and told his suspension would be subject to completing a "programme of education and rehabilitation."

Controversially, Mutu's ban was shorter than the eight-month suspension the FA gave to Manchester United and England defender Rio Ferdinand for missing a drugs test.

It was also less than the nine-month ban imposed on former Chelsea keeper Mark Bosnich, although the Australian refused to accept his guilt unlike Romania captain Mutu.

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RESULTS AT A GLANCE

UEFA CUP
AFP, Paris

UEFA Cup results on Thursday:

Group A:
At Edinburgh Hearts (SCO) 0 Schalke 04 (GER) 1 (Lincoln 73)
At Budapest Ferencvaros (HUN) 1 (Tozsar 27) Feyenoord (NED) 1 (Kalou 62)

Group B:
At Parma, Italy Parma (ITA) 1 (Budel 79) Steaua Bucharest (ROM) 0
At Istanbul Besiktas (TUR) 3 (Gunes 26, Carew 63, Akin 89) Athletic Bilbao (SPA) 1 (Ezquerro 49)

Group C:
At Utrecht, Netherlands Utrecht (NED) 1 (Douglas 88) Dniepropetrovsk (UKR) 2 (Rotan 12, Semotko 83)
At Vienna Austria Vienna (AUT) 1 (Glewicz 71) Real Zaragoza (SPA) 0

Group D:
At Newcastle, England Newcastle (ENG) 2 (Shearer 38, Belamy 56) Dynamo Tbilisi (GEO) 0
At Lisbon Sporting Lisbon (POR) v Panionios (GRE), late kick-off

Group E:
At Belgrade Partizan Belgrade (SEM) 4 (Ilic 23, 55, 60, Vukovic 68) Aigaleo (GRE) 0
At Middlesbrough, England Middlesbrough (ENG) 2 (Zenden 16, 71) Lazio (ITA) 0

Group F:
At Graz, Austria Graz AK (AUT) 3 (Kollmann 32, 61-pen, 71) Amica Wronki (POL) 1 (Dembinski 27)
At Alkmaar, Netherlands Alkmaar (NED) 2 (Huysegems 3, 19) Auxerre (FRA) 0

Group G:
At Stuttgart, Germany VfB Stuttgart (GER) 3 (Cacau 31, Meisner 52, Kurany 72) Benfica (POR) 0
At Zagreb Dynamo Zagreb (CRO) 6 (Da Silva 16, Mijatovic 21, Zahora 35, 41, Kranjcar 55, Mujcin 87) Beveren (BEL) 1 (Vlemincx 82)

Group H:
At Lille, France Lille (FRA) 2 (Tafforeau 35, Moussilou 42) Zenit St Petersburg (RUS) 1 (Kerzhakov 39)
At Sevilla, Spain Sevilla (SPA) 2 (Aranda 7, Baptista 77-pen) Alemannia Aachen (GER) 0

Chelsea slam 'weak' FA

AFP, London
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Preview: Premiership

Derby time in Manchester

Football
AFP, London

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A more reassuring level of service was resumed in Wednesday's 4-1 Champions League win over Sparta Prague but United fans will be painfully aware that the architect of that triumph, Ruud van Nistelrooy, will be missing from action on Sunday as he completes the final leg of a three-match domestic ban for stamping on Arsenal's Ashley Cole.

"It is a disappointment that Ruud will not be available but that is why you have big squads of players," said Ferguson. "We've got Alan Smith and Wayne Rooney available -- so it is not as if we are short of strikers."

"We keep saying we need to get some momentum behind us and that is what we need to do. We all deserve to see better than what we saw last Saturday."

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Despite injury problems which mean Keegan is likely to hand Willo Flood and Stephen Jordan their second Premiership starts, the former England manager is optimistic about his side's prospects of finally slaying their Old Trafford jinx.

"I know we've not won there for nearly 30 years because people keep telling me," he said. "But we've got to do it at some point, so why not this week?"

"With all the injuries and the fact we'll have one or two younger players out there, people will give us no chance but there is always a chance in football."

Arsenal, who have looked distinctly shaky in their two draws since losing to United on October 24, would normally expect to return to winning ways against Premiership newcomers Crystal Palace.

But the absence of injured England centreback Sol Campbell combined with the form of Palace's star striker Andy Johnson, currently the top scoring Englishman in the Premiership, makes Saturday's meeting at Crystal Palace an intriguing London derby.

Chelsea will be confident of taking advantage of any further slippage from the Gunners when they entertain third-placed Everton.

Jose Mourinho's side, written off as drearily defensive at the start of the campaign, have struck eight in their last two Premiership outings and became the first English side to book their place in the last 16 of the Champions League in midweek.

Confidence is a plentiful commodity around Stamford Bridge at the moment but Mourinho faces a worthy adversary in the form of David Moyes, who has brilliantly revitalised Everton's workaday squad this season.

Liverpool, who have been quietly moving up the table, can move to within touching distance of the leaders if they can continue their strong home form against Birmingham at Anfield.

Preview: Primera Liga
Barca's goal unchanged
Football
AFP, Madrid

Spanish league leaders Barcelona try to extend their unbeaten streak to 10 games in the Nou Camp against Deportivo La Coruna on Saturday following success in midweek Champions League action.

Barcelona were superb in beating Milan 2-1 in the Champions League on Tuesday and coach Frank Rijkaard will hope that confidence spills over into domestic action.

Many pundits believe Deportivo's poor form this season, including in the Champions League where they have yet to win in four games and went down 1-0 at home to Liverpool on Wednesday, means they will be easy meat for the carnivorous Catalans, but Barca captain Carles Puyol counselled otherwise.

"Deportivo may not be enjoying good times at the moment but they are still a great team and they have had some good games in the Nou Camp," warned Puyol.

Barcelona fans need only turn the clock back 12 months for confirmation with the Galicians winning 2-0 thanks to goals from Albert Luque and Sergio Gonzalez, both of whom are expected to be in the starting lineup on Saturday.

"I still remember that game vividly," added Barca's Dutch defender Giovanni Bronckhorst.

"We all thought we were going to win that one. What we have to do is keep our concentration and carry on in the same confident manner we had against Milan. But Deportivo will be looking to end their streak and will be very dangerous," added the former Arsenal players.

Both sides came through their mid-week Champions League commitments relatively unscathed, although Barca's Samuel Eto'o admitted to being rather battered and bruised after some full-blooded attention by the Milan defenders.

Deportivo coach Javier Irureta is expected to opt for Diego Tristan as his main target man and drop his out-of-form Uruguayan international striker Walter Pandiani.

Barcelona have 23 points from their nine games and a six-point advantage over second-placed Sevilla, who play host to relegation-threatened Real Mallorca on Sunday.

Sevilla coach Joaquin Caparros will run the rule over their squad in the wake of their UEFA Cup tie against Alemannia Aachen on Thursday but already knows that he will have to bring in reinforcements following the suspensions of defender Javi Navarro and midfielder Jose Luis Martí.

Real Madrid are third, ahead on goal difference of Real Zaragoza and Levante who all have 16 points, and the 29-times Spanish champions face a trip to Malaga on Sunday.

"The pressure is on us because of the gap between ourselves and Barcelona. It's a long way to the end of the season and everything is far from decided yet but we can't let the gap grow any more," said Real coach Mariano Garcia Remon.

Malaga coach Gregorio Manzano was happy to adopt the role of underdog on Thursday and warned that even dogs of this particular variety can bite.

"I've seen it a number of times, when Real Madrid think they are playing an inferior team they sometimes get distracted and only come out with half their minds on the job in hand," said Manzano.

"OK, so Real Madrid don't always need to play at 100 percent to win but Malaga is capable of springing some surprises," he added.

Malaga will be without their suspended striker Clever Romero but will still have plenty of firepower in the shape of their summer signing Paulo Wanchope. The Costa Rican international has already found the net four times, including several spectacular long-range strikes.

Preview: Serie A
Juve the team to beat
Football
AFP, Rome

Italy coach Marcello Lippi has first-hand knowledge of Juventus having won five Serie A titles during his two spells in charge in Turin, and he believes the championship is theirs to lose this season.

Juventus visit struggling Reggina on Saturday looking to stretch their lead over AC Milan to eight points ahead of the defending champions' potentially tricky home match against Roma a day later.

Juve have taken 25 points from their nine matches played and on Wednesday they clinched a place in the knockout stages of the Champions League with a 1-0 win at Bayern Munich, their fourth successive victory.

"Whoever wants to win the title will have to take it off Juve," said Lippi, who left them in the summer to take charge of the national team but was unable to end his tenure with a trophy.

"Fabio Capello's team have a determination that I know very well having lived in that atmosphere."

"This spirit has been strengthened because they won nothing last season and now they are desperate to make up for it."

"And I also know that when those players have it in their minds to do something, you can rest assured they will be successful."

Former Juventus midfielder Michel Platini believes his former club are better equipped than their rivals to handle an arduous season that has been made even more difficult by the expansion of Serie A from 18 to 20 clubs.

"The depth of Juve's squad will prove decisive," said the Frenchman, who scored 68 goals in 147 league games for Juventus.

"They have excellent reserves, so the team is always competitive regardless of injuries and suspension."

Milan were beaten 2-1 away to Barcelona on Tuesday but are still on course for a place in the last 16 of the Champions League, unlike Sunday's opponents Roma who were all but eliminated after their draw against Bayer Leverkusen.

Third-placed Lecce, thumped 4-0 away to Fiorentina last week, will be looking to make amends at home to Udinese on Sunday.

Messina, who ended a run of three consecutive defeats by beating local rivals Reggina last Sunday to climb to fourth spot, visit Bologna.

Inter Milan are happy to be able to focus on the league for a while after reaching the knockout stages of the Champions League on Tuesday thanks to a goalless draw with Valencia.

Having drawn seven of their nine matches, Inter are lagging 12 points behind Juventus and need to start winning if they are to keep alive their dreams of claiming their first title since 1989.

"Now we can concentrate all our efforts on climbing the table," said Inter coach Roberto Mancini.

Atalanta, anchored to the bottom and the only club in Serie A without a win, entertain Sampdoria in Bergamo.

Preview: Bundesliga
Work hard wonderboy!
Football
AFP, Lisbon

Manchester United's Portuguese teen striker Cristiano Ronaldo has the skills to become the world's best football player but will have to work hard if he wants to earn this title, Real Madrid star Luis Figo said Thursday.

"I wish I had, at his age, the talent he displays. If I had had so much talent I would not have had to work as much as I did," Figo told sports daily A Bola.

"He can become, within three or four years, if not earlier, one of the best if not the best, player in the world," the Real Madrid star added.

"He will have to work hard for this, because talent alone, does not cause miracles. Throughout my life I have encountered many players with more talent than me but they did not go as far as I did."

Figo announced in August that he would stop playing for Portugal after a 12-year career in which he was the country's standout player having scored 31 goals in 110 caps, a national record for appearances, which he shares with Fernando Couto.

Since he announced his retirement from international football, Ronaldo, 19, has been increasing his goals for the Portuguese press as Figo's successor in the national squad.

Figo added he intends to meet with Real Madrid chiefs next month to determine if the club plans to extend his current contract, which is set to expire in 2006.

The 32-year-old player said his first option would be to stay on at Real Madrid for one more year but if the club says they will not extend their contract he would look into leaving before the end of the current season.

"Obviously the opportunities and the type of offers which I would receive at the end of this season would be different from those I might be offered in a year and a half," he told the newspaper.

Figo joined Real Madrid from Barcelona in 2000 for what was then a world record transfer fee of 56 million euros (72 million dollars).

He became the FIFA world player of the year the following year. FIFA has nominated the player, along with his Portugal squad teammates Ronaldo and Deco, for the title again this year, which will be decided on December 20 in Zurich.

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AFP, London

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