

Proteas soup up one-day squad

AFP, Centurion

South Africa announced six changes Tuesday to their one-day squad to play against England in a seven-match series starting in Johannesburg on Sunday.

Five players were dropped from the squad that lost all five matches in Sri Lanka last year and then failed to advance beyond the group stage in the ICC Champions Trophy in England last September.

Axed were Martin van Jaarsveld, Lance Klusener, JP Duminy, Alan Dawson and Robin Peterson.

Six players were brought into a 15-man party for the first four matches. The only uncapped player is AB de Villiers, the 20-year-old batsman who made 92 and 109 in the fifth Test which ended at Centurion Tuesday.

Recalled were Adam Bacher, Andrew Hall, Ashwell Prince, Justin Kemp and Andre Nel.

Bacher, 31, an opening batsman and medium-pace bowler, last played for South Africa in 1997-98.

SQUAD

Graeme Smith (captain), Nicky Boje (vice-captain), Adam Bacher, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers, Herschelle Gibbs, Andrew Hall, Jacques Kallis, Justin Kemp, Charl Langeveldt, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Ashwell Prince, Shaun Pollock, Jacques Rudolph.

Rafique return

FROM PAGE 13 will join the A team later," said Faruque.

The chief selector was tight-lipped about the prospects of middle-order batsman Al Shahrar who made a brilliant match-saving century against Zimbabwe in a three-day warm-up game in Chittagong.

Faruque also said that they were thinking of selecting a strong side for next month's Duleep Trophy competition in India.

"We are yet to decide who will lead that side. We will announce a 15-member team for the first class competition after this series. We have decided to pick a mixed side including current and out of favour national caps and one or two promising faces," said Faruque adding that ex-national captain Naimur Rahman was very much under consideration for the Duleep Trophy.

Weather worries

FROM PAGE 13 Ponting said Symonds might be promoted in the order, with regular number four Damien Martyn being rested.

All-rounder Shane Watson, bowler Michael Kasprovicz and Martyn were left out of the Australian team and replaced by batsman Simon Katich, spinner Brad Hogg and pace bowler Jason Gillespie.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA: Ricky Ponting (captain), Matthew Hayden, Michael Clarke, Darren Lehmann, Andrew Symonds, Simon Katich, Brad Haddin, Brad Hogg, Brett Lee, Jason Gillespie, Glenn McGrath.

WEST INDIES (from): Brian Lara (captain), Shivnarine Chandepaul, Chris Gayle, Wavell Hinds, Ramnaresh Sarwan, Marlon Samuels, Dwayne Bravo, Ryan Hinds, Courtney Browne, Ian Bradshaw, Pedro Collins, Mervyn Dillon, Reon King, Xavier Marshall.

England set

FROM PAGE 13 Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-29, 3-256, 4-267, 5-277, 6-296

Did not bat: Pollock, Oje, Ntini, Nel

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Hoggard	14	2	51	1
Flintoff	13	2	46	2
Giles	11	1	50	0
Sjones	19	2	74	1
Harmison	16	2	59	2



THAT'S THE WAY OUT: Wimbledon champion Maria Sharapova makes a point during her match with fellow Russian and US Open winner Svetlana Kuznetsova at the Australian Open yesterday.

Serena, Sharapova set for showdown

Australian Open

AFP, Melbourne

Serena Williams sounded a warning to her teenage nemesis Maria Sharapova as the two rivals emerged from the Melbourne Park furnace to reach the Australian Open semi-finals Tuesday.

Williams has a losing 2-1 record against 17-year-old Sharapova, with painful defeats coming last season in the Wimbledon final and the WTA Tour Championships in Los Angeles.

Now Williams and Sharapova will meet again in the last four on Thursday after winning quarterfinals played in fierce heat. And with more hot weather forecast, the temperatures could well tip the scales in Williams' favour.

Unquestionably, it was the former world number one who looked more comfortable as the mercury rose on the Rod Laver Arena on Tuesday, demolishing French second seed Amelie Mauresmo 6-2, 6-2 in just over an hour.

Siberia-born seed Sharapova found the going much harder before summoning the willpower to prevail 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 against compatriot Svetlana Kuznetsova.

Sharapova's match was halted for 10 minutes after the second set under the tournament's extreme heat rule, a decision which saw both Russians' play improve in the decision.

But Sharapova admitted afterwards that she had been struggling. "I need a wheelchair right now," she said after completing an energy-sapping victory in 2hr 17min.

"I was just trying to tell myself

mentally just to get through it," she said, adding that gruelling winter conditioning work had paid off.

"I kept thinking back in my off-season, you know, how hard it was when I was training physically, and I thought I couldn't go any more, but I knew that I had some more even though my body thought I didn't."

"I remember those moments, and I just kept fighting, just trying to take as much time as I can and fight."

Kuznetsova admitted the temperatures had made conditions hard but she put the defeat down to an inexplicable collapse that saw her game fall to pieces in the second and third sets.

"I was very focused and I played very well first set," Kuznetsova said.

"And after that something happened, so I just stopped. I mean, I just stopped playing. My body was there, but my mind wasn't there at all."

"I can't blame the heat as an excuse. It's a lie. I think I was coping with it better than Maria, I felt okay."

But while Sharapova and Kuznetsova looked drained after their tie, seventh-seed Williams -- the 2003 champion -- appeared fresher than ever after romping past Mauresmo in 1hr 11min.

"I feel great," said Williams, used to playing and training in the heat and humidity of Florida. "I played a really solid match. I'm used to making about 40 errors but today I made a lot less."

"It was extremely hot out there. Was that the hottest I've been? Maybe. It was definitely one of the hottest," added Williams.

"To me it doesn't matter. If they'd closed the roof I would have been okay, but if they kept it open I was fine too."

Afterwards, Williams rounded on pundits who had questioned whether her and sister Venus were in decline after a barren 2004 where both failed to win a grand slam for the first time since 1998.

The 23-year-old said that injuries and trauma caused by the 2003 murder of their sister Yetunde Price were often overlooked by those who had written them off.

"I don't appreciate that language, to be honest with you," Williams replied when it was remarked that prevailing talk had been of a decline in fortunes.

"I'm tired of not saying anything, but that's not fair. We've been practising really hard. We've had some serious injuries," she said.

Mauresmo was disconsolate after seeing another grand slam campaign end in defeat.

The French world number two said a sore adductor muscle had reduced her to a hobbling passenger, barely able to move around the court.

Mauresmo, who was forced to withdraw from last year's Australian Open with a back strain just before the quarterfinals, said she had been afraid of injuring herself more seriously as a result.

"Tennis is already tough when you're 100 percent, when you're 50 percent, when you're not moving so well on both sides, it's getting tougher and tougher," Mauresmo said. "So what can I do?"

The 25-year-old said her injury made it impossible to accurately assess Williams' performance.

"She had nothing to do but just put the ball back in," said Mauresmo.

"You can't really judge her form."

Federer blows Agassi away

FROM PAGE 13 to win in straight sets. I think it needs such a good performance to beat Andre so convincing," Federer said.

"He's one of the best returners of all time, so that puts an unbelievable amount of pressure on you."

"I always tried to have a good start to each service game. That's what I think made the difference in the end."

"It's going to be fantastic to play Marat again after last year's final and I'm really looking forward to playing him again."

Federer's virtuoso performance

enabled him to equal Agassi's stretch of 26 unbeaten matches set back in 1995 -- the joint third-longest winning streak since 1990 behind Austrian Thomas Muster's 35 in 1995.

"His game was way better than mine tonight, way better than mine," Agassi admitted. "That's a hard game to stop for many reasons. We've seen it for a while. I certainly didn't do anything to make a dent in that."

The Swiss maestro's last defeat match was to Czech Tomas Berdych in the second round of the Athens Olympics tournament last August.

The last time Federer lost to a top-10 opponent came against Spain's Juan Carlos Ferrero, who was world number one at the time, in Madrid 15 months ago.

Federer brought gasps from the Rod Laver Arena crowd with his dazzling array of groundstrokes and a potent serve which returned 22 aces.

Federer has now beaten Agassi in their last five meetings over the last two years and leads 5-3 overall.

Agassi came under pressure in the sixth game of the opening set when he double-faulted on his fourth break point to deliver Federer a 4-2 lead.

Agassi, who has reigned here with victories in 1995, 2000-01 and 2003 before Federer won last year, took the top seed to six deuces before Federer served out for the opening set in 35 minutes.

From there it was one-way traffic as Federer broke Agassi again in the opening game of the second set when the 34-year-old American's backhand was wide.

"I was happy to win the first set. That gave me just a little bit of cushion and I didn't expect to start like I had into the second set, but I had it in the end."

Agassi never gave up and stretched Federer to three deuces before the Swiss great held serve with an ace and a thundering first serve.

The reigning Australian, Wimbledon and US Open champion served out for the second set and went two-up when Agassi's forehand was long.

Yet again Federer broke Agassi in the first game of the final set and defied the veteran American's best efforts to break back and prevent him from a straight sets victory.

Federer is bidding to become the first player to win three consecutive grand slams since American Pete Sampras in 1993-94 and become only the third man in the Open era (post-1969) to achieve it along with Australian Rod Laver.

Bergkamp's ideal goodbye plan

Football

AFP, London

Arsenal striker Dennis Bergkamp hopes to end his playing career when Arsenal bid farewell to their historic Highbury home in north London next season.

Bergkamp, 36 in May, proved he still had what it took to succeed in the Premiership when he scored Arsenal's winner in Sunday's 1-0 win against Newcastle at Highbury on Sunday with a sublime finish.

Arsenal are set to move to their new multi-million pound home at nearby Ashburton Grove at the end of the next campaign but whether the former Dutch international will then still be a part of their plans is uncertain.

Bergkamp arrived at Highbury 10 years ago for 7.5 million pounds and his capture from Inter Milan was arguably manager Bruce Rioch's most important decision during his short period in charge of Arsenal before Arsene Wenger took over in 1996.

"As for the future, I feel good," said Bergkamp, whose fear of flying has forced him out of several key Champions League matches for the

club over the years.

"It would be nice to have another year, to experience the last year at Highbury. It has been a big part of my life. But we will see. Everything will be sorted out at the end of the season."

"My decision would be to have another year. But I don't know what will happen. Sometimes it is difficult to know what the boss and the club

are thinking. I am in my 10th year at the club."

"As for a testimonial, we are thinking about it. But I am still focusing on my playing career and we will have to see what happens. A testimonial, as I see it, is the last game of your career," added Bergkamp, who was part of the Dutch teams that were knocked out on penalties in both the 1998 World



DENNIS BERGKAMP

REVISED TOUR OF NZ SL bring in 2 rookies

REUTERS, Colombo

Sri Lanka have selected two uncapped quick bowlers in a 24-man training pool for their rescheduled two-Test tour of New Zealand in April.

Channaka Welagedera and Nandika Ranjith are both left-armers.

Welagedera, 23, was called up after performing impressively for the Sri Lanka Cricket Academy while touring Sharjah and Bangladesh late last year.

Ranjith, 32, has been pushing for selection for several years but has been overlooked despite an excellent first class record of 210 wickets in 54 matches at 25.75.

SQUAD

Marvan Atapattu, Mahela Jayawardene, Sanath Jayasuriya, Muttiah Muralitharan, Kumar Sangakkara, Ian Daniel, Saman Jayantha, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Thilan Samaraweera, Jehan Mubarak, Russel Arnold, Chaminda Vasis, Prasanna Jayawardena, Dilhara Fernando, Nuwan Zooya, Lasith Malinga, Farveez Maharoof, N'wan Kulasekara, Upul Chandana, Kaushal Lokuarachi, Rangana Herath, Thilina Kandamby, Nandika Ranjith, Channaka Welagedera.

Tikolo smells a rat in Kenya

AFP, Nairobi

A veteran Kenyan cricket player said Monday he suspected the sport's recent tribulations were the result of an organised plot intended to bring down the national side at a crucial time.

Former skipper Steve Tikolo said the sacking this month of the Kenya Cricket Association (KCA) governing board, the subsequent legal battle over its replacement and the weekend departure of coach Andy Moles for Scotland were part of a plan to hurt the game.

"It was a deliberate conspiracy to bring down Kenyan cricket," he said, recalling that sacked chief of the KCA had at first accepted the decision but then used to stop it and that Moles had denied interest in the Scotland job.

"It is all one and the same thing," said Tikolo, who led Kenya to their first-ever semifinals of the 2003 World Cup in South Africa.

Tikolo was one of the 12 senior players expelled from the national team last October following a row over new contracts with the KCA but on Monday he was reinstated.

He was part of a side named Monday to start training for the ICC Intercontinental Cup qualifier against Namibia in Windhoek on February 25-27, the first match to be played since the departure of Moles.

Inspiration

FROM PAGE 13 "I want to complete the mission tomorrow here in Chittagong," Simmons told a group of reporters at the team hotel in the morning.

The former West Indian cricketer had reasons to feel confident since his boys had stuck to his game plan in the first two encounters.

"Obviously we were looking to win the one-day series to make up for the loss in the Tests. Now we want finish it off here before going back to Dhaka," Simmons said.

However, he was not ready to take things for granted.

"We're leading the series but that doesn't mean we should become complacent right now. The guys must keep in mind that both matches in Dhaka and Chittagong were close ones and we didn't win by a wider margin," he added.

The Zimbabweans opted to take a day off from cricket and so most of the players rested at the hotel. Only Barney Rogers and Brendan Taylor took a trip to the picturesque Bhatiyar Golf and Country Club.

Hoyzer could have fixed more games

Football

AFP, Frankfurt

German referee Robert Hoyzer, suspected of fixing a German Cup match on which he had bet money, could have fixed other matches, the German football federation (DFB) said on Monday.

DFB director general Theo Zwanziger said he could have fixed five matches in all: two in the second division and three in the northern regional division (or third division).

The DFB has decided to open an investigation while the Brunswick prosecutors office has already launched an inquiry into the SC Paderborn versus SV Hamburg match on August 21 last year in which 25-year-old Hoyzer officiated.

Hoyzer, regarded as one of the biggest refereeing talents in

Germany, came under the microscope after regional side Paderborn came from 2-0 down to defeat Hamburg 4-2.

Hoyzer gave Paderborn two questionable penalties and sent off Hamburg's Belgian striker Emile Mpenza for backchat.

The DFB first got whiff of scandal on Wednesday last week and their disciplinary commission spoke to Hoyzer and others on Friday.

"I have never bet on matches when I was the referee," said Hoyzer in Monday's Bild newspaper. Hoyzer, a referee since 1994, resigned on Saturday but denied that it proved he was guilty. "I will defend myself," he said.

The DFB president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder confirmed Monday that they are considering implementing a ban preventing all players, referees and club management from betting on football matches.

Warm-up win for Pakistan

Cricket

AFP, Canberra

Pakistan cruised to a morale-boosting five-wicket victory with more than seven overs to spare in their one-day tour match against a Prime Minister's XI at Canberra's Manuka Oval here Tuesday.

Test regulars Younis Youhana and Younis Khan both made half centuries, with stand-in captain Youhana looking the more comfortable of the two before he was run out for 50.

Man-of-the-match Younis was also in fine touch, hitting five boundaries on his way to an unbeaten 62.

The win gave Pakistan a much-needed shot of confidence as they prepare for their next triangular VB Series limited-overs match against the West Indies in Adelaide on Sunday.

Pakistan, thrashed by nine wickets in their last outing against Australia in Sydney last Sunday, are battling with the West Indies for the right to play the host nation in the best-of-three finals series in the competition.

"This is a good start for winning against Australia," Youhana said. "It was good for me to make some

runs, as well as Younis Khan.

"I think our bowling was very good, especially Azhar Mahmood and Shoaib Malik -- everyone had a good performance in this match."

Mahmood finished with 2-23 from seven overs while Shoaib Malik, who has not bowled at international level since his action was deemed illegal last month, took 3-29 off 10 overs.

For the Prime Minister's XI, Western Australian Luke Ronchi, who is rapidly making a name for himself at state level as a big-hitter, got the home team off to a blazing start with an incredible 40 runs off 13 balls.

After being sent in to bat, Ronchi, 23, turned on an awesome display of power hitting, belting two sixes and six fours to leave the home side at 51 for 0 at the end of the fourth over.

"It was a good start -- he played very well but after he was gone, I think we took hold of the match," Youhana said.

The Prime Minister's XI captain Michael Bevan agreed, saying the home side probably left themselves about 30 runs shy of a competitive total.

"I think the wicket flattened out pretty nicely and they got the best of the batting conditions," he said.

No Flintoff for ODIs

Cricket

REUTERS, Centurion

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff has been withdrawn from the one-day international series against South Africa to undergo surgery on a long-standing ankle injury.

The England and Wales Cricket Board replaced him with seamer Matthew Hoggard on Tuesday for the seven-match one-day series starting on Sunday.

"Flintoff will return home tomorrow (Wednesday) to see a specialist to confirm an early date for surgery," England media manager David Clarke told reporters.

"Hoggard will remain on tour to play in the one-day series."

Clarke said fast bowler Simon Jones, who was also not in the original one-day squad, would remain in South Africa as cover for Stephen Harmison, who has an injured left calf.

"We're looking for Jones to play a full part in the one-day squad,"

Clarke added.

Flintoff has played 40 one-dayers for England and is key to the side's balance. Hoggard has had a superb Test series against South Africa but has not been part of the England one-day set up for two years. He played the last of his 20 one-dayers against Australia in Sydney on January 23, 2003.

Mohali venue

FROM PAGE 13 to arrive on February 25 for three Tests and five one-day internationals.

The teams have not played a Test series in India since 1999 because of political tensions between the two countries. India embarked on their first Test tour of Pakistan for 14 years last March after a thaw in relations.

However, activists from the radical Hindu party, Shiv Sena, have said they will attempt to disrupt the one-day match in Delhi in protest against the tour. The PCB, however, has said it is confident the Board of Control for Cricket in India will make adequate security plans.

Cup and the Euro 2000 semi-finals.

Meanwhile Arsenal's prolific France international striker Thierry Henry backed Bergkamp's call for another year at Highbury.

"He fancies playing another year I also fancy him playing for another year. Without saying anything bad about anyone, when Dennis plays, I only concentrate on going behind the defence," Henry said. "When he is not there, I have to drop back."

"I have played with a lot of great players and he is amazing. He always has a great desire when he is on the pitch and you can never complain about him."

"At his age, to be doing what he is doing, it is unbelievable. I don't know if I will still be playing at his age. He is a great guy."

Arsenal's latest win reduced the gap on leaders Chelsea to 10 points, still a commanding advantage, but Bergkamp refused to concede the title just yet.

"It was so important to get a result against Newcastle. As for the gap between us and Chelsea, you never know. It will be difficult but we try not to look at the table."

"We need to start playing like we used to. We can't do anything about Chelsea. We have lost too many points and that is our own fault."

Kaka Serie A's best of 2004

REUTERS, Rome

AC Milan midfielder Kaka has been named Serie A's Player of the Year for 2004 by his fellow players.

The 22-year-old Brazilian international pipped team mate and European Footballer of the Year Andriy Shevchenko and Best Italian Player Francesco Totti to the award voted for by members of the Italian Footballers' Association (AIC).

"It's always nice to learn that your work is appreciated," Kaka was quoted as saying in La Gazzetta dello Sport on Tuesday.

"I want to stay here and win here for a long time to come."

Kaka proved one of the revelations of the 2003-04 season. Virtually unknown in Italy when Milan bought him from Sao Paulo in 2003, he scored 10 times in 30 matches as Milan ran away with the Serie title.

On a good night for the Italian champions, Carlo Ancelotti was named Best Coach and Milan captain Paolo Maldini won Best Defender.

The grass is Dutch for Real

AFP, Madrid

Spanish giants Real Madrid are to relay their Bernabeu Stadium pitch with Dutch grass the club revealed on their website on Monday.

Real decided to buy the Dutch grass after their pitch deteriorated due to a mixture of training sessions and a series of home matches.

"The first work has begun," said the statement.

"From Wednesday the pitch itself will be gradually dug up and the new turf from the south of Holland will be laid at the weekend."

"The treatment of the grass will begin next Monday so that it will be in perfect condition for the visit of Espanyol the following Saturday."

Real played their last match on the present turf - which was in a dreadful condition - on Sunday beating Real Mallorca 3-1.

Hearing set for Di Canio

AFP, Rome

Lazio captain Paolo Di Canio is to face a disciplinary hearing over a fascist salute allegedly made by the veteran striker in last month's Rome derby, the Italian football federation (FIGC) said Monday.

Photographs and television pictures show Di Canio extending his right arm to the Lazio fans after scoring the opening goal in the 3-1 victory over their bitter rivals Roma on January 6.

The FIGC have studied the evidence and now it is up to Di Canio to plead his case in front of an independent tribunal. Di Canio, 36, has strongly denied he intended to cause offence, while Lazio president Claudio Lotito has defended his skipper.

Roma director Franco Baldini has also been called up for a disciplinary hearing following his condemnation of Di Canio's goal celebrations. No dates have been set for either hearing.

Italy's former fascist dictator Benito Mussolini used to support Lazio and the club's fans have a history of suspected fascist leanings.

A member of AC Milan's championship winning squad in 1995/96, Di Canio spent many seasons in Great Britain. He played for Celtic, Sheffield Wednesday, West Ham and Charlton.

During his two years at Sheffield Wednesday, he received an 11-match ban for pushing referee Alcock to the floor after being sent-off in a match against Arsenal.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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