

Proteas climb ODI ladder

SPORTINGLIFE, undated

South Africa have their sights set on second place in the one-day ratings after the 4-1 series win over England on Sunday.

Four wins in a row helped the Proteas up to fourth place in the rankings from seventh, which means they have effectively switched positions with Michael Vaughan's men since the start of the best-of-seven campaign.

It has proved a huge turnaround for the South Africans, who had won just once, against Bangladesh, in 14 attempts prior to their current streak.

Now they can improve their standing with series victories at home to Zimbabwe and against the West Indies in the Caribbean.

Roddick captures San Jose again

AFP, San Jose

American Andy Roddick cruised past unseeded Cyril Saulnier 6-0, 6-4 for his second consecutive San Jose ATP title and 16th career tour victory.

Top seed Roddick, who was on the course for less than an hour, posted his first win of 2005.

"The first set was really good on my part," said Roddick, who took home \$2,000 dollars for the victory.

"I was feeling really confident, compared to earlier in the week when I came in struggling."

The 22-year-old Roddick was coming off a disappointing loss to Australia's Lleyton Hewitt in the semi-finals of the Aussie Open.

Roddick defeated unheralded American Mardy Fish in the final here last year.

Enamul strikes

FROM PAGE 13 caught behind by wicketkeeper Dhiman Ghosh for a two-ball duck on the same score.

Enamul struck just before stumps by trapping Samunderu lbw in his only over.

Ahmedabad

FROM PAGE 13 The last time India and Pakistan played in Ahmedabad was in 1987.

Mani said he hopes the visit of the Indian Foreign Minister Natwar Singh to Pakistan leads to a resolution.

"The matter can get sorted out in the meeting of Singh with Pakistan officials, who will voice their own concerns," he said.

"Security is an issue which cannot be handled by anyone except the government. Moreover, cricket and politics cannot be separated in this part of the continent."

Kevin dreams

FROM PAGE 13 "Pietersen has been outstanding throughout and is probably disappointed to be on the losing side.

"Kabir Ali has given his all, but South Africa were a bit too strong for us."

"We are moving in a decent direction -- we have progressed over the last year. We have got a big summer ahead but at least we have had a decent break now."

South Africa captain Graeme Smith said: "We were under pressure after the Test series so we are really chuffed with the way we played."

"The pleasing thing is we are taking steps forward. We played some really good cricket and the boys are very happy."

Certain players may now be rested for the home series against Zimbabwe.

Smith said: "We have got selection this week. One or two guys have got niggles so we'll see what happens."

London waits for IOC team

OLYMPICS

REUTERS, London

Based around the capital's historical landmarks, a London Olympics in 2012 would enjoy passionate support from a racially diverse community, Games inspectors will be told this week.

Bid leader Sebastian Coe will show a team of 13 International Olympic Committee (IOC) inspectors around London on the second stop of their five-city tour from February 16-19.

The inspectors will be offered dinner with the Queen and meet Prime Minister Tony Blair. The country's Olympians will also be on hand to greet the inspectors, with five-time Olympic rowing champion Steve Redgrave expected to take a leading role.

The IOC team, which started in Madrid, will next travel to New York, then Paris before finishing in Moscow in mid-March. The IOC will announce the winning city in Singapore on July 6.

The London bid has been hampered in recent months by negative press reports and the belief that Paris is the front runner to host the Games in 2012 but Coe will look to

regain momentum with a tour across the capital.

Huge posters and signs are draped across the city, urging Londoners to "Make Britain Proud".

"London is looking at its best to welcome the IOC, and it is important that they are left in no doubt that this is a city and a country who really want to host the Games in 2012," Coe said.

"Our aim is to create a growing and lasting image of London as an Olympic city that gets people excited about backing our bid. We want the whole of London and the UK to help us make this the most vibrant and colourful bid in the 2012 race."

Crucially, Blair and London's Mayor Ken Livingstone have given their full support to the bid.

"I am determined to do all I can to bring those Games to the United Kingdom," Blair has said.

"The cultural and social benefits are also exciting. We would be welcoming the world to this country during an Olympic Games."

A London Games would combine modern venues, such as the Olympic park which would be built in the heart of London's deprived East End, with established tourist landmarks such as Hyde Park, Wimbledon and Lord's cricket ground.

Difficult time ahead of King

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

If evidence were needed that Bennett King's all-too-brief honeymoon period as West Indies coach is over, it came courtesy of a stinging editorial on caribbeancricket.com which lambasted King for not returning to the Caribbean after West Indies exit from the VB Series in Australia.

King remained in Australia while the rest of the squad returned home last week, and although a spokesman for the West Indies Cricket Board said that his return was "imminent", that out noise.

"It is equally offensive to have the cricket czar taking time off in the midst of a first-class season, especially considering his lack of familiarity with the region's players," fumed Ryan Patrick.

"What better opportunity could there be to establish working relationships with the individual team coaches and managers, and get their insight on their players?"

"King's carefully crafted image as a

hard taskmaster has been rammed down our throats. If the team's on-field performance doesn't improve soon, the long hot-sun practices will mean nothing."

Patrick's comments are not echoed elsewhere, where the consensus seems to be that King has not had nearly enough time to make any real impact.

Although West Indies were successful in September's ICC Champions Trophy, that cannot disguise the reality that he took over a side in virtual freefall and one where real class was in short supply.

Although King will not be given an easy time if the forthcoming home series against South Africa and Pakistan go badly, the one-dayers in Australia were his first chance to see his new charges in action and probably left him painfully aware of just how big a challenge he has on his hands.

There is, however, a sizeable minority in the Caribbean that believe appointing a foreign coach was wrong, and in their eyes King can do no right.

Smith stands by Jennings

BBC ONLINE, undated

South Africa captain Graeme Smith has called for Ray Jennings to be made national coach on a permanent basis.

The United Cricket Board (UCB) of South Africa is advertising the post, but caretaker boss Jennings said he would only reapply if his team wanted him to.

"Jet (Ray Jennings) is very important, but we will have to wait and see what the United Cricket Board of South Africa decides," said Smith.

"It is a difficult situation at present." Jennings took on the job last year but came under pressure following Test series losses away to India and at home against England.

"I think Ray is also enjoying his position more now. It is always easier when you win," said Smith after his side salvaged some pride by winning the one-day series against England 4-1.

Jennings' contract runs until the end of the team's tour to the West Indies in May.

But he said: "It does not help if I waste my time and energy and the people around me do not support me."

Pure football, pure hope

FROM PAGE 13 and he has no doubts that it is the most natural game of all.

"Everyone start by kicking the ball around and once there are five or six people you can make two teams. It is instinctive. This is our game."

Blatter described football as a durable product but he believed it must remain a game -- a game of association football which is easy to play and watch.

Fifa has come a long way since Blatter joined the organisation three decades ago. Then it had 11 staff compared to today's 220. Fifa now has 205 member nations with new entries coming from faraway places such as islands in the Pacific. Fifa's revenue now tops US\$1 billion annually.

It is undertaking 170 projects around the world to promote the development of football -- half of which have been completed. The financial outlay is US\$426 million

under a four-year cycle.

The Fifa chief emphasised on transparency in the conduct of the affairs of international football. Here he pointed out that the value of the World Cups have gone up steadily. Financially, the 2006 World Cup in Germany will surpass the event in Japan/Korea, he felt while the 2010 World Cup in South Africa will exceed all expectations.

"The reason (for the success of football) is that the product is good," he said.

The huge TV audience helps the financial success. For instance, the Athens Olympic Games attracted an accumulative TV audience of 3.8 billion whereas the Japan/Korea World Cup was beamed live to 28 billion people.

Blatter has some harsh words about exhibition matches by European giants in Asia. He agreed with one of the editors that it is merely a money-making exercise and does nothing for the quality of

the game.

"When the players get back to their leagues, they are tired. This affects the quality of the game. But it's about money and we cannot intervene," he conceded.

The Fifa chief was adamant in his opposition to introduction of technology in football including the call for TV replays to help referees.

"Football is not a technology game. It must maintain a human face. With technology, it will finish," he said.

He referred to the recent controversy over a referee's conduct in a match between Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premier League where the ball clearly went over the United goal line. This was witnessed by millions of TV viewers but the referee or linesmen never noticed.

"You don't need technology to decide... you need eyes and a bit of brain," Blatter quipped.

Aussie bookies favour Aussies

AFP, Sydney

Local bookmakers here believe the Australians have the beating of England in this year's Ashes series even though there is money coming in for the home side in cricket's time-honoured contest.

While England have been given their best chance in years to win back the Ashes, bookmakers here do not see anything to change their view that it will be Ricky Ponting's team who will take the honours once again this northern summer.

Most of them have Australia at 2-1 on -- you have to bet two dollars to get one back -- to win the five-match Test series and wrap up a record ninth consecutive Ashes victory.

England are rated around 3-1 against to end a losing streak dating back to 1989.

"Betting against Australia is a very risky business," Australia's CentreBet spokesman Gerard Daffy said Monday.

"I think England are at their right price now. They keep wheeling out all these names that are going to rescue them and win the Ashes back but they're blokes that have been playing for a long time anyway."

"They're obviously going to be competitive to some degree ... There's been plenty of money around for England to win based on a couple of questionable wins in South Africa and against West Indies -- hardly enlightening form to be taking on the best side in the world."

"We've been betting on this for six months. We did have England at 4-1 at one stage but even at 11-4 we continue to see money for them."

Daffy has written one bet of 5,000 Australian dollars (3,900 USD) at 3-1 from an English punter but the big money on cricket usually comes from India, where professionals tend to wait until the last minute to avoid the chances of injury to key players.

"We haven't sighted the Indian punters yet but historically they back Australia in everything, so I'd say getting closer to the event that's where the money will be."

"They just love Australia because you always get a good run for your money."

Sweet S African

FROM PAGE 13 all-out aggression in the last 10 overs, needing just 24 more balls to reach his century. He hit 10 fours and cleared the boundary six times.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard of the seventh and final one-day international between South Africa and England at Centurion Park in Pretoria on Sunday: ENGLAND: 240 all out in 49.5 overs (Pietersen 116, Giles 41, Ali 25; Hall 3-52, Ntini 2-47, Nel 2-60)

SOUTH AFRICA Smith c Solanki b Giles 47 Hall c Harmison b Wharf 23 Kallis c Trescott/ck Vaughan 36 Gibbs lbw b Harmison 0 Prince not out 62 Boucher run out (Strauss) 44 Kemp c Giles b Ali 4 Pollock c Collingwood b Wharf 6 Boje not out 1 Extras: (lb-2, nb-2, w-14) 18 Total: (For 7 wks in 49 overs) 241 Fall of wickets: 1-46, 2-106, 3-107, 4-148, 5-218, 6-228, 7-236 Did not bat: Ntini, Nel.

Bowler O M R W Wharf 10 1 51 2 Harmison 10 0 55 1 Ali 9 0 48 1 Collingwood 5 0 25 0 Giles 10 0 38 1 Vaughan 5 0 22 1 Result: South Africa won by 3 wickets.

Series: South Africa won 4-1. Man-of-the-match: Kevin Pietersen. Man-of-the-series: Kevin Pietersen.



Former world number one Martina Hingis of Switzerland plays in a charity match against Spain's Arantxa Sanchez before the Diamond Games event on February 13 in Antwerp.

Federer back to battle

Tennis

AFP, Rotterdam

Top seed Roger Federer will begin the battle to re-establish his superiority as he opens as top seed against a qualifier at the 782,250-euro Rotterdam Open on Monday.

The Swiss stylist, fresh from an award presented at the weekend by German television, will attempt to put aside his loss in the Australian Open to Marat Safin in five sets to concentrate on this one week of indoor tennis.

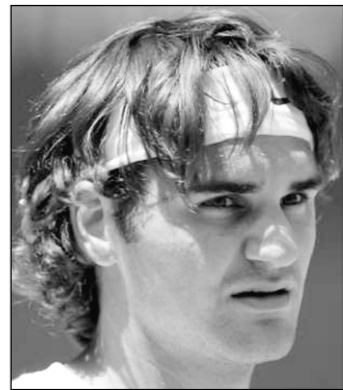
Federer heads the field ahead of a pair of seeds whose fitness has been suspect. Number two Guillermo Coria of Argentina is still somewhat troubled by a back, as is number three Briton Tim Henman, playing the event where he beat Federer a year ago in the quarter-finals after missing Marseille this week with his own back problems.

Coria takes on a home hope Raemon Sluiter in the first round, while Henman, ousted in the fourth round of the Australian Open by Russian Nikolay Davydenko where

his continuing back problems likely played a role in defeat, starts with German Nicolas Kiefer.

The level-headed Federer, who lifted 11 trophies - including three of the four Grand Slams -- in 2004 is not letting any pressure to defend his sterling record in 2005 get to him.

"I live my whole life with pres-



ROGER FEDERER

sure," said the Swiss, who kicked off the Rotterdam week on Saturday with a short trip on a round-the-

world racing yacht at this massive seaport.

Argentine David Nalbandian is seeded fourth, ahead of on-fire Swede Joachim Johansson, who won in Marseille on Sunday to add to his victory in Adelaide at the start of the season.

Juan Carlos Ferrero, last year's losing finalist to Australian Lleyton Hewitt -- resting at home as he prepares for a March Davis Cup date in Sydney against Austria -- is back in Rotterdam fighting to escape a huge slump.

Unseeded, the Spaniard who now stands 63rd and falling, opens against German Rainer Schuettler.

SEEDS table listing players and countries for the tournament.

She's no longer little sis

Tennis

AFP, Paris

More commonly known as the little sister of two-time Grand Slam winner Marat Safin, Russian teenager Dinara Safina came of age Sunday when she lifted her first major title at the expense of world number four Amelie Mauresmo at the 585,000-dollar Paris Indoors Open.

The 18-year-old Safina was playing in just her fourth final after previously winning lower tier events in Sopot in 2002 and Palermo in 2003, and being runner-up in Luxembourg in 2004.

But the 48th-ranked player's 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 disposal of second seed Amelie Mauresmo of France in 2hr 20min in front of her home crowd confirmed the growing mental strength which indicates things to come.

"I've started to be strong in my mind. I feel better the last few months," explained the Muscovite, who reached a career-high 29th last April

before being sidelined with back and knee injuries.

Like her former world number one brother, who lifted his first Australian title after losing in two finals over the last three years, Safina puts her improvement, in part, down to her new Swedish coach Lars Wahlgren whom she teamed up with two weeks ago.

"He's a Swede and knows my brother's coach, I wasn't beginning to enjoy it. He started to say 'come on, have fun!' He's opened my eyes a little bit."

Growing up is also travelling without her mum who coached her in the past.

"It's not that I don't want her with me. We get on good," explained Safina, whose first call courtside after her victory at the Pierre de Coubertin Stadium was for her mother back home in Moscow.

"I've been getting a bit older. I was travelling with my mother and she was taking care of certain things. Maybe it helps to be a bit stronger in my head to travel on my own."

That mental strength helped her

avenge her 2-6, 6-1, 6-0 defeat to Mauresmo in their previous meeting in the Australian Open second round last month.

"In Melbourne the conditions were different. It was so hot, I was dying in the second set," she said, adding that a tacking off from big brother also helped.

"He was a bit angry with me. He told me you don't fight," said Safina.

"I'm going to tell him now 'see I fight!'"

Her \$3,000 dollars prize-money might be her biggest earnings to date to add to the 608,000 dollars previously earned, but there is no time to rest.

Clijsters on comeback trail

REUTERS, Brussels

Former world number one Kim Clijsters makes her comeback from a serious wrist injury at the Antwerp Diamond Games this week.

Clijsters last played in early October when she retired in the second set of a match against Russia's Elena Bovina. That tournament in Belgium had been her first for five months.

"I don't expect great things, I am just happy to be able to play again," Clijsters told reporters at the weekend. "I have practised several times on centre court to try and find my touch slowly."

"I have been training normally since January 4. I'm still stiff around my wrist but it's not painful any more."

Clijsters, 21, will play Croatia's Jelena Kostanic in the first round of the \$585,000 Antwerp tournament on Tuesday, her first on-court appearance since splitting from fiancé Lleyton Hewitt.

The Belgian was a victim of her own success -- in 2003 she was the first women's player to contest more than 100 singles matches since Chris Evert in 1974.

She reached the Australian Open final in January/February 2004 before suffering wrist injuries which led to her pulling out midway through a tournament in Berlin in May.

Clijsters had surgery to remove a cyst on her left wrist -- she is right-handed but has a two-handed backhand -- in June and had an abortive comeback in early October. Later that month she and Hewitt announced their four-year romance was over, just five weeks after stating their intention to marry in Australia this month.



Russian Dinara Safina shows off the Paris Open trophy after defeating Amelie Mauresmo 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 in the final on February 13 at the Pierre de Coubertin stadium.

PHOTO: AFP

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across, Down, and Cryptokuip.

Cryptokuip puzzle grid and solution: S I C F S R X K T M E X X Z K C L Z P Z Z D X T F S I L R T I F T W C P Z X M C S R T W W X K E S G D G X W C I R C W X S X U T U D

Today's Cryptokuip Clue: W equals L. The Cryptokuip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Thorpedo gives World C'ships a miss

Swimming

REUTERS, Sydney

Ian Thorpe will skip this year's world swimming championships in Montreal in an attempt to peak for the 2008 Beijing Olympics, his coach Tracey Menzies says.

Menzies said in an interview broadcast on Australian television on Monday that Thorpe wanted to take a year off competition to avoid burn-out.

"This year, 2005, Ian won't be standing up to race at world titles," Menzies said.

"(It's) going to be hard for the Australian team and hard for his team mates -- but it's something he needs to do in preparation for Beijing."

Thorpe, 22, has been in the Australian senior team since he was 14 but took a long break after last year's Athens Olympics where he won four medals, including gold in the 200 and 400 metres freestyle.

He has returned to light training but is well below peak fitness. The

Australia trials are scheduled for next month.

Thorpe has won 11 gold medals at the world championships, more than any other swimmer in history.

He became the youngest man to win a world title when he took the 400m freestyle as a 15-year-old in Perth in 1998. He won a record six gold medals at Fukuoka in 2001 and in 2003 in Barcelona he became the first swimmer to win the same event three times when he triumphed again over 400m.

His teammate Grant Hackett, who won the 1500m for the third time running in Barcelona, will now be the favourite to win the 400.

Thorpe's next major assignment will be next year's Commonwealth Games in Melbourne followed by the 2007 world championships, also in Melbourne.

"It is definitely going to be a hard path for him to get himself back in shape but it's not something I would do if I didn't think he wasn't capable of coming back," Menzies said.

"I think it has been good that he has had a bit of a break and time to grow as a person."