

Blignaut back in Zim squad

CRICINFO, undated

Andy Blignaut has been named in the Zimbabwe squad for the Test against South Africa at Cape Town which starts today.

It follows Heath Streak's return to the national side in Wednesday's final one-day international at Port Elizabeth.

Blignaut, an explosive all-rounder, is the latest of the 14 rebels who have not played for almost a year to make a comeback after agreeing terms with Zimbabwe Cricket.

While out of the international arena Blignaut, 26, tried to forge a career in Australian domestic cricket by signing with Tasmania. But he had a chastening experience, as poor form and injury restricted him to just one first-class match, which resulted in figures of 12 overs for 79 runs.

However, his Test record is more impressive – he has taken 51 wickets at 32 apiece with five-wicket hauls against India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. He is also the only Zimbabwean to take a Test match hat-trick, against Bangladesh at Harare in 2003-04.

Gaibandha cricket

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Ghagot Krira Chakra defeated Brave Heart SC by seven wickets in the First Division Cricket super league at the local stadium here yesterday.

Brave Heart, who elected to bat after winning the toss, were bundled out for 144.

In reply Ghagot reached 148 for three in just 23.2 overs.

Chalk & cheese

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Inzamam, being the best and more experienced batsman of his team, is always expected to lead from the front.

He sometimes may not appear to be as much involved in the game as his Indian counterpart, but he cannot afford to fail with the bat in a side thin on experience.

Inzamam is no Imran Khan, a former captain who transformed Pakistan into a fighting unit with the sheer force of his personality and performances. Imran was strong enough to have a major say in almost all things concerning his team.

Inzamam has often being accused of being "soft", but is second to none when it comes to setting an example with his own performance.

He is Pakistan's leading run-getter in both forms of the game, having scored 7,052 in 97 Tests and 10,631 runs in 336 one-dayers.

Inzamam is also different from Ganguly in that he has been leading a seemingly divided team, at least until the arrival of celebrated English coach Bob Woolmer.

Ganguly and Inzamam, however, both perform under the pressure of fans' expectations. Neither can afford defeat over the next month.

Harbhajan

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Now the 24-year-old, nicknamed the 'Turbanator' in a reference to the head-covering he wears as a Sikh, can look forward to playing in India's home Test and one-day series against arch-rivals Pakistan later this month.

In his career to date Harbhajan has taken 189 wickets in 43 Tests.

This is not the first time he has had his action come under official scrutiny.

Back in 1998 he was forced to undergo remedial work in London where former England off-spinner Fred Titmus helped him remodel his action.

And, in common with all bowlers, there remains the possibility his action could yet be questioned again although the new regulations make such an outcome less likely than in previous years.

Streak heroics go awry



AFP, Port Elizabeth

South Africa completed a clean sweep despite an impressive return to international cricket by former Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak in the third and final limited-overs international at St George's Park Wednesday.

South Africa won by five wickets with 21 balls to spare but it was a close contest after South Africa gained crushing wins in the first two matches.

Inspired by Streak, Zimbabwe made a remarkable comeback after being 35 for five early in the match.

Streak hit 68 in a total of 206 for eight, then took the first South African wicket as the home side slipped to 79 for four.

It should have been 79 for five but Justin Kemp was given not out by umpire Ian Howell when he edged his first ball from Tawanda Mupariwa to Zimbabwe captain and wicketkeeper Tatenda Taibu.

Kemp, who was dropped on 21 and 30, went on to clinch victory for South Africa by hitting an unbeaten 78 off 81 balls with four fours and four sixes.

Zimbabwe were in with a chance until the 44th over when South Africa scored 17 off an over from Christopher Mpofo.

Kemp was made man-of-the-match by match referee Alan Hurst of Australia but it was Streak who changed the momentum of what had been a one-sided series.

He started his innings when Zimbabwe were in desperate trouble at 35 for five and steered his

side's recovery until he was run out off the penultimate ball.

Streak, 30, had not played for Zimbabwe since leading the country against Bangladesh on March 14, 2004.

He was sacked as captain after a dispute over selection and was one of 15 players who walked out on the Zimbabwe Cricket Union.

He rejoined the team Monday after agreeing to sign a new contract.

Lack of match practice showed as he batted cautiously in the early part of his innings and he did not hit the first of his five boundaries until he had faced 65 balls.

He shared stands of 67 with Brendan Taylor (41) and 88 with Gavin Ewing (46) as South Africa failed to press home their early dominance.

South Africa were captained for the first time by Nicky Boje, with regular skipper Graeme Smith resting a sore left ankle ahead of a two-match Test series which starts in Cape Town Friday.

With most of South Africa's leading bowlers also being rested, Boje had a second string attack at his disposal but it was surprising that he did not see more attacking fields after Zimbabwe's early collapse.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard in the third and final limited overs international between South Africa and Zimbabwe at St George's Park Wednesday:

ZIMBABWE
Matsikenyeri c Boucher b Zondeki 17
Rogers c Boucher b Langeveldt 1
Williams c Kemp b Langeveldt 1
Masakadza c Gibbs b Zondeki 2

Taylor c Kemp b Bacher	41
Taibu run out (De Villiers)	0
Streak run out (Morkel)	68
Ewing b Morkel	46
Utseya not out	6
Mupariwa not out	1
Extras: (lb-4, nb-6, w-13)	23
Total: (For 8 wkts in 50 overs)	206
Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-12, 3-23, 4-32, 5-35, 6-102, 7-190, 8-205	
Did not bat: Mpofo	
Bowler	O M R W
Langeveldt	10 0 40 2
Zondeki	10 1 46 2
Kemp	6 2 17 0
Morkel	8 0 54 1
Boje	10 0 23 0
Bacher	6 0 22 1

SOUTH AFRICA	
Bacher b Mpofo	9
De Villiers c Taibu b Streak	7
Rudolph c Taibu b Mupariwa	33
Gibbs c Taibu b Mupariwa	21
Prince run out (Williams)	28
Kemp not out	78
Boucher not out	18
Extras: (lb-1, nb-2, w-10)	13
Total: (For 5 wkts in 46.3 overs)	207
Fall of wickets: 1-11, 2-35, 3-72, 4-79, 5-138	
Did not bat: Morkel, Boje, Zondeki, Langeveldt	
Bowler	O M R W
Streak	8 1 28 1
Mpofo	9 0 59 1
Mupariwa	7 0 25 2
Utseya	8 0 27 0
Williams	9.3 0 43 0
Ewing	5 0 24 0

Result: South Africa won by 5 wickets and sweep the 3-ODI series 3-0.
Man-of-the-match: Justin Kemp.
Man-of-the-series: Graeme Smith.
Umpires: D Harper (Australia) and I Howell (South Africa).

Cairns says no to Test offer

REUTERS, Wellington

Chris Cairns has turned down an offer to rejoin New Zealand's injury-hit Test team for this month's three-match series against Australia.

Cairns retired from the Test arena last year to concentrate on one-day cricket as the demands of playing both were taking a toll on his body.

With the Kiwis battered by injuries in the lead-up to the series, New Zealand coach John Bracewell asked Cairns to consider making a comeback next month but the all-rounder said he was unable to play.

"I've closed that chapter of my career," Cairns told reporters on Thursday.

"I've still got a goal to play the next World Cup and if I play Test cricket I could ruin that."

"It's about me following a dream and I still think I can get there."

Bracewell said he fully understood Cairns' position.

"His response was basically that he was flattered by the offer but he had drawn a line under that," Bracewell said.

"He also didn't really think his ankle would last the rigours of a Test match. He's drawn that line but I had to ask him and he understood that."

Pakistan's faulty

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at the crease before giving a bat-pad catch to skipper Mohammad Kaif at short mid-wicket.

Inzamam and Kamal then propped up the innings with their sensible knocks, but Pakistan's batting still left a lot to be desired ahead of the Test series.

Pakistan will also play six one-day internationals on their tour of India, their first in six years.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the opening day of a three-day practice match between Pakistan and Indian Board President's XI on Thursday:

PAKISTAN: First innings	
Butt run out	21
Umar c Kaif b Rudrapratap	37
Younis c Jadhav b Gagandeep	0
Youhana c Patel b Paul	18
Inzamam lbw b Rao	35
Kamal not out	43
Razaqq not out	2
Extras: (b-5, lb-2, nb-2)	9
Total: (For 5 wkts in 45 overs)	165
Fall of wickets: 1-54, 2-55, 3-83, 4-83, 5-155	
To bat: Akmal, Sami, Kaneria, Naved	

Bowler	O M R W
Rudrapratap	13 3 50 1
Gagandeep	15 3 40 1
Powar	4 0 22 0
Paul	8 2 23 1
Rao	5 0 23 1

BOARD PRESIDENT'S XI: Kaif, Jadhav, Parab, Patel, Rao, Patel, Raina, Powar, Rudrapratap, Gagandeep, Paul.

Dhaka's run ends

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after they elected to bat at the Barisal Stadium.

But any hopes of a first win for the hosts were promptly laid to rest as Sylhet chased in style. Number five Golam Mawla led the way with a magnificent 85 not out.

Even though they had lost opener Golam Rahman without a run on the board, fellow opener Maniruzzaman, fresh from a match-saving innings in the last four-day fixture, kept his composure which allowed the other batsmen to play their natural game. The Mymensingh batsman, playing as a guest player for Sylhet, laid anchor (55 off 93) and shared a decisive 109 for the fourth wicket with Mawla who came to the wicket at 70-3. Mowla went on to partner Rezaul Haque (46 not out off 51 ball

s) in an unfinished 70-run stand for the sixth wicket as Sylhet reached home with eight balls to spare. Man-of-the-match Mawla's innings had eight fours and a six.

Serena crawls into last 8



AFP, Dubai

Serena Williams overcame an early scare in windy conditions to beat Russia's Elena Bovina in three sets to reach the last eight of the Dubai Open here on Wednesday.

The former winner of all four Grand Slams came through 1-6, 6-1, 6-4 but she was tense and erratic in

racket and was given a code-of-conduct warning for abuse of equipment.

She was hooted for the code violation and then jeered for her reaction to it, and after losing the next point she waved her arms as though she were orchestrating the jeers.

However, after the second-seeded superstar got into the match, she struck some blistering winners which won over most of the specta-

shock. "I wasn't used to the conditions - balls were hitting the fence and out and into the net. I had to kind of gather myself. And it became a great experience with a great crowd and I was really excited," she said.

Bovina's best moments came not so much in the first set, which was gifted to her, but in the third where she retained enough self-possession to recover from the storm of losing ten games out of 11 to make a reasonably close finish of it.

She also recovered from 0-4 down to 4-5, with a bold commitment to counter-attack, even when it was into the mouth of the cannon, and this policy earned her a break of service in the sixth game.

But she couldn't repeat the achievement, Serena closing out the match to love in a game containing an ace, a service winner and one forehand which almost punctured the ball.

It earned the tournament's biggest draw a match with Daniela Hantuchova, the tour's come-back heroine.

The former world number five, whose career was threatened by personal problems and weight difficultness as she plunged from the top 50, continued an encouraging revival with a win over Elena Likhovtseva.

Hantuchova's 7-5, 6-4 success over the Russian earned her a third quarter-final of 2005, already an improvement on 2004 during which she only managed two all-years.

Serena Williams is seeded for another final with Lindsay Davenport, which would give her a revenge attempt for her defeat in the Australian Open final.

The top-seeded American came through with a comfortable 6-2, 7-5 win over Zheng Jie, a Chinese qualifier, and now plays Conchita Martinez, the former Wimbledon champion from Spain.

She beat Nathalie Dechy, the number seven seed from France, by 6-1 6-2.



PHOTO: AFP

World number two Serena Williams reacts after losing a point to her Russian opponent Elena Bovina during their Dubai Open match on Wednesday.

the first set in only her first match since being taken ill in Paris a fortnight ago and only her second victory since losing the Australian Open final a month ago.

So rattled was Serena by her early difficulties on her first visit to the Middle East that she smashed a

tors, and soon they were cheering her victory enthusiastically.

"I think I was trying to kill myself out there," said the younger Williams sister.

"It was really windy and I had not played in the wind for a while and all my shots were whistling out. It was a

Davis Cup begins today



AFP, Undated

Spain captain Jordi Arrese has surprisingly chosen Feliciano Lopez and Fernando Verdasco, instead of Rafael Nadal, to open their defence of the Davis Cup against Slovakia.

Left-hander Lopez and Verdasco, both 21, are preferred ahead of 18-year-old clay-court specialist Nadal, the hero of the 2004 final against the United States. Carlos Moya is sitting out Davis Cup this year.

Lopez beat Tomas Berdych in his only other Davis Cup singles rubber in Spain's 3-2 win over the Czech Republic in Brno on a similar hard-court in the first round last February.

Verdasco, who will make his Davis Cup debut, was one of most improved players on ATP circuit last year, finishing in the Top 40 for first time, capturing his first ATP title and registering a personal-best 31 match wins.

HEWITT TO LEAD AUSTRALIA

World No.2 Lleyton Hewitt will lead off Australia's Davis Cup first-round tennis tie against 144th-ranked Austrian Alexander Peya on grass in Sydney on Friday.

Australia's second singles player Wayne Arthurs will take on Austria's number one player Jurgen Melzer in the other singles. Australian captain John Fitzgerald designated Arthurs to team up with doubles specialist Todd Woodbridge in Saturday's doubles against the Austrian pair of Julian Knowle and Peya.

In Sunday's reverse singles, Hewitt will take on Melzer, ranked 34 in the world, in the battle of the national

number ones.

Austria defeated Australia 5-0 at their last Davis Cup meeting in Vienna in 1989 in which they played on a clay court laid over carpet. But the Australians are seeking to reinforce their home advantage by laying a drop-in grass court on the Sydney Olympic Tennis Centre's main court.

Australia have won the Davis Cup 28 times, second only to the United States, and last won the annual tennis teams' trophy in 2003 against Spain in Melbourne on grass.

AGASSI RETURNS

Andre Agassi returns to the US Davis Cup fold this week, hoping to help the Americans avenge a 2003 defeat as they host Croatia in a World Group first-round tie.

Agassi, 34, will be playing Davis Cup for the first time since 2000. He joins young gun Andy Roddick - rapidly establishing himself as a Davis Cup standout - and the doubles duo of Bob and Mike Bryan.

It's a formidable lineup for the hosts, who will take on a Croatian team made up of world number 14 Ivan Ljubicic and 23th-ranked Mario Ancic.

Ancic and Ljubicic won the bronze medal in men's doubles at the 2004 Olympics while Ancic also reached the semi-finals of Wimbledon last year, losing a four-set match to Roddick.

Ljubicic arrives in Los Angeles having lost to world number one Roger Federer in the ATP final at Dubai on Sunday.

MURRAY THE YOUNGEST Seventeen-year-old Andrew Murray will make history at the weekend when he becomes the youngest player to represent Britain in a Davis Cup tie.

The teenager will make his debut in

the Euro-African Zone match in Tel Aviv against Israel in the doubles rubber alongside David Sherwood, who is also playing for the first time.

Murray becomes Britain's youngest Davis Cup player ahead of Roger Becker, who was aged 18 years and 101 days when he made his bow against Yugoslavia in 1952.

In the first match since Tim Henman's retirement from the competition, Murray's inclusion confirms him as the bright hope of British tennis having picked up the US Open junior title last year.

PAES ONLY IN DOUBLES

Leander Paes, India's most successful Davis Cup player, will not play the singles in the Asia-Oceania group one first round tie against China starting in New Delhi on Friday.

Paes, the team captain with a 71-30 win record in Cup play, decided instead to field Harsh Mankad and Prakash Amritraj on the grass courts of the R.K. Khanna Tennis Stadium.

"I don't think I could have taken the load on all three days," Paes, 31, said after the draw was finalised at the residence of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday morning.

SRICHAPHAN THE KEY MAN

Asia's top tennis player Paradorn Srichaphan holds the key as Thailand meet Pakistan in the Davis Cup Asia Oceania Zone Group 1 first round tie in Lahore.

Thailand lost all three previous Davis Cup ties in Pakistan in 1998, 1989 and 1984 but the presence of world number 33 Paradorn will give them an edge despite playing on grass courts.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 That guy Miller

4 Prima donna

8 Aware of

12 Raw mineral

13 Bucks' mates

14 "OK"

15 Zero-star review

16 Trendy

18 Peer

20 Nevertheless

21 Applaud

24 Crowdbar

28 Guarantee

32 Start over

33 Part of

34 Puts on the line

36 Self

37 Elevator name

39 Owing

41 By the book

43 Comet feature

44 Driver's license

46 Dracula's waking hours

5 Charged bit

6 Dr. Dolittle, e.g.

7 Van

9 Fresh

10 Mai

11 Resistant

17 Slithery

19 Essen

22 Hillside

23 Emulate

1 Clinton's

20 Emulate

2 OPEC member

3 Carte

4 Taught by

27 Cross

28 "American"

29 Memo-

30 Brick-

31 "nest"

35 Big

38 Gilder

40 Actor

42 Gypsy

45 Grand

50 "Little Teapot"

51 Neither

52 Slick

53 Chic no

54 Harem

29 Memo-

30 Brick-

31 "nest"

35 Big

38 Gilder

40 Actor

42 Gypsy

45 Grand

50 "Little Teapot"

51 Neither

52 Slick

53 Chic no

54 Harem

Solution time: 21 mins.

ITEM ACROSS TOE

MALE LIRE OLD

PULLOVERS WIG

THAW TIAHOE

SATIES FIRE

LOUPE FRAIGRANT

ANG BLAZE DUD

TEMPLATE WELT

CHEW CADLE

BEGIN WEAR

DIR MAGNOLLY

ARA SUO SHLE

YEW REPS DOTS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

12 13 14

15 16 17

18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27

28 29 30 31 32

33 34 35 36

37 38 39 40

41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49

50 51 52 53 54 55

56 57 58

59 60 61

CRYPTOQUIP

O Q B D F L F D Y Z K B T Y S

U S L I B A R S J Y S N J R F

N S F Y . O S J A C R S J U S D T K C B Z

K Y F T F K A T I K Y U Q ?

Yesterday's Cryptquip: MY ADVICE: DON'T HOLD LOOSE CHANGE AROUND VENDING MACHINES. THEY ARE COINVOUS.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: Y equals T

The Cryptquip 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.

BCB look down

FROM PAGE 13

all out in 129.3 overs (Abbas 122, Bundela 83, Kartik 33; Anwar Hossain 4-58, Talha 4-122)

BCB XI: First innings (overnight

Al Sahariar c Pagnis b Harvinder	0
Nafees lbw b Srivastava	0
Aftab c Abbas b Yadav	18
Ashraf c Abbas b Yadav	30
Kapali lbw b Yadav	12
Manzural c Parida b Harvinder	47
Sahagir st Ojha b Kartik	16
Razzak c Ojha b Srivastava	12
Anwar lbw b Srivastava	0
Nazmul c Ojha b Srivastava	4
Talha not out	0
Extras: (b-4, nb-3)	7
Total: (All out in 55.4 overs)	146
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-0, 3-52, 4-61, 5-66, 6-108, 7-136, 8-136, 9-142	
Bowler	O M R W
Harvinder	13 3 45 2
Srivastava	11.4 2 33 4
Yadav	14 7 29 3
Bangar	9 2 23 0
Kartik	5 2 8 1
Parida	3 1 4 0

CENTRAL ZONE: Second innings

Pagnis c Talha b Anwar	15
Bangar not out	91
Bundela c Sahagir b Aftab	53
Abbas c Aftab	0

Yadav c Sahagir b Aftab	0
Ojha c Nazmul b Aftab	0
Doru c Sahaghir b Aftab	29
Kartik not out	5
Extras: (b-7, lb-5, w-6, nb-1)	19
Total: (For 6 wickets in 79 overs)	212
To Bat: Harvinder Singh, SJ Srivastava, KS Parida.	
Fall of wickets: 1-21, 2-97, 3-103, 4-103, 5-103, 6-189	
Bowler	O M R W
Anwar	13 6 33 1</