

School chess

SPORTS REPORTER

A total of 11 players shared the lead in Group B (Class VI to X) with three points each after the third round of the Standard Chartered school chess tournament at the National Sports Council conference room and BCF hall room yesterday.

The leaders are: Bitan, Abhrratanu, Nilabro, Saimon, Olid, Sayed, Sharif, Anwar, Nazmus, Masum and Riazul.

Five players were jointly on top in Group A (KG to Class V) with three points each. They are Saif, Anruddah, Moinuddin, Shayan and Rafiul.

In the girls' competition, Sukanya Dutta, Mohona Sengupta and Mehnaz Ahmed Mithila were sharing the lead also with maximum three points.

School kabaddi

SPORTS REPORTER

The School Kabaddi Championship began at the Outer Stadium yesterday with 39 schools participating in the 12-day meet.

In the primary section, Maniknagar Government Primary School beat Dhitpur Government Primary School 38-32, Brahmanchiron Government Primary School defeated Siddirganj South Primary School 50-27, Darus Salam Primary School outplayed Motijheel Primary School 55-7.

In high section, Ansar VDP High School beat Nasirabad High School 54-6, National Pre-cadet High School defeated Natan Kudi High School 59-46 and Shaheed Nabi High School beat Khilgaon Government Staff Quarters High School 50-16.

Vaas' perfect

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Jayawardena c Morton b Best 6
Samaraweera c Deonarine b Banks 37

Dilshan run out	36
Vaas c Ramdass b Best	6
Wijekoon c Ramdass b Powell	14
Herath c Ramdin b Powell	1
Muralitharan not out	18
Malinga c Ramdin b Powell	0
Extras: (lb-6, nb-1)	7
Total: (All out in 46.1 overs)	150
Fall of wkts: 1-3, 2-17, 3-35, 4-42, 5-98, 6-107, 7-127, 8-130, 9-143.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Powell	13.1	4	25	5
Lawson	10	0	29	0
Best	10	1	50	3
Banks	13	1	40	1

WEST INDIES: First innings
Marshall c Atapattu b Vaas 4
Ramdass run out 3
Morton b Vaas 1
Chanderpaul lbw b Vaas 13
Joseph c Dilshan b Vaas 18
Deonarine not out 36
Ramdin not out 8
Extras: (b-4, lb-1, nb-4) 9
Total: (For five wkts in 41 overs) 92
Fall of wkts: 1-9, 2-9, 3-12, 4-27, 5-75.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vaas	13	6	17	4
Malinga	9	3	22	0
Wijekoon	5	2	9	0
Muralitharan	3	0	12	0
Herath	9	0	26	0
Jayasuriya	2	1	1	0

Toss: West Indies.
Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS) and Tony Hill (NZL)
Match referee: Mike Procter (RSA)



STAR-STRUCK! Manchester United footballer Ruud van Nistelrooy (R) signs autographs for fans after a training session at the Hong Kong stadium on July 22. United will play a friendly match against the Hong Kong team today.

Park could perk up MU

Football

AFP, Hong Kong

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson praised South Korean newboy Park Ji-Sung Friday and said English and European clubs could expect to see many more like him as Asian football advances.

"He has showed exactly what we think about him, very good movement off the ball, very quick, two-footed, brave," Ferguson said in praise of his new summer import.

The 24-year-old midfielder, who signed for four million pounds (seven million dollars) from Dutch side PSV Eindhoven earlier this month, is part of a near full strength squad to play the Hong Kong national team on Saturday.

The South Korean international has played only part of a couple of warm-up games for his new club and has left Ferguson only able to quibble about his ability to grasp a new lan-

guage.

"Park played in the first half of the two games and he did well," Ferguson told journalists at a press conference shortly after the squad touched down in Hong Kong.

"I think though for any young player coming in the language is at the moment a bit of a problem. He speaks a little English which is quite good, but I think in a few months time we will see an improvement in his English," Ferguson said.

Ferguson confirmed that Park would play at least part of Saturday's game against the Hong Kong national side as United embark on a tour to prepare for the new season beginning in August and satisfy their legions of Asian fans.

China's Dong Fangzhuo is another new signing expected to make his debut in Beijing on Tuesday, and Ferguson was full of praise for Asian players.

"I think that emerging players from the Far East, you'll see more and more of them in the next decade in English football clubs and other teams in

Europe because I think there's a great potential there, improving their fitness and their physique.

"Professionalism is seeing a development in Chinese, Japanese, Korean players more rapidly than maybe you were seeing two decades ago, and the future is very bright," he said.

United, third in last season's English Premiership campaign, will complete their tour of Asia with fixtures against Japanese J League sides Kashima Antlers and Urawa Red Diamonds on July 28 and 30.

The club has courted Asia assiduously over the years with initiatives including a Chinese-language website, club shops, soccer schools and credit cards.

Park is billed as the next big thing in Asian football.

After helping South Korea reach the 2002 World Cup semi-finals and PSV Eindhoven into the last four of this year's Champions League, the 24-year-old is the Premier League's most promising Asian signing.

Bond brimming with confidence

REUTERS, Wellington

Fast bowler Shane Bond says he is back to full fitness after a series of back injuries and looking forward to forcing his way into New Zealand's team for their controversial tour of Zimbabwe next month.

Bond, who suffered a second stress fracture in his back during last year's tour of England, has not played Test cricket since the tour of Sri Lanka in May 2003.

The 30-year-old has recently returned from an Emerging Players tournament in Brisbane where he said he felt he was getting his rhythm back.

"As it turned out my timing was nearly spot on," Bond told New Zealand Cricket's (NZC) website on Friday.

"In the early games it was a matter of trying to get my timing and rhythm right and that took a bit of time. But by the last game I was bowling pretty quickly.

"I just need time on my feet to get back to full pace and I got very close in that last game," he said.

Bond has played only 10 Tests since making his debut against Australia in 2001, taking 43 wickets at 24.30, and is keen to add to his tally.

"It's up to me to force my way back into the team," he said of the Zimbabwe tour which includes two Tests and a triangular one-day series which also involves India.

"I would love to get into the starting 11 for either a Test or a one-day international at some stage on the tour."

The tour of the southern African country has come under intense political scrutiny, with the New Zealand government leading a push to have Zimbabwe banned from the international schedule because of concerns over human rights abuses under President Robert Mugabe.

Real cautious on Robinho

Football

REUTERS/SPORTING LIFE

Real Madrid have not yet completed the signing of Brazilian forward Robinho from Santos, the Spanish club said on Friday.

"We have to be cautious," vice-president Emilio Butragueno told Real's website. "The door has been opened to the signing of Robinho but it still hasn't been finalised, although it is very close."

The nine-time European champions said they paid 60 percent, or \$30 million of the \$50 million buy-out clause stipulated in Robinho's contract to buy Santos's share of his rights.

"We've presented a document to the Brazilian Federation that guarantees the payment of 60 percent of the player's rights. We still have to wait but there is no doubt that it is a very important decision.

"We have to remain prudent but we hope that everything will become clear in the next 24 to 48 hours.

"He's a different player with enormous talent and there aren't many players like him around at the moment. We've got a week left of our tour (of Asia) and if the signing is speeded up then we will take a decision to see if he can join up with the rest of the team."

In a further development the Primera Liga club said they had presented the documentation for the transfer to the Spanish FA (RFEF) who in turn had requested Robinho's International Transfer Certificate from the Brazilian FA.

Robinho's agent Wagner Ribeiro said the 21-year-old had agreed to forego the 40 percent of his rights to which he was entitled, accounting for the shortfall of \$20 million in the buy-out clause.

But Brazilian club Santos insisted Robinho still belonged to them and that they were due the full \$50 million.

"They haven't deposited anything," club president Marcelo Teixeira was quoted as saying by Spanish sports daily Marca.

"The situation hasn't changed and things are the same as they were before. If Real Madrid deposits the \$50 million Robinho will go, but if not he will stay at Santos."

Meanwhile, superstar Ronaldo was delighted to hear that Robinho's arrival at Real was eminent.

In China, where he is on tour with the rest of his Madrid team-mates, Ronaldo reacted happily to the news that Robinho's on-off transfer saga was finally coming to a positive end.

"What can I say, he is my friend, I speak to him almost every day and I am certain that we are all going to enjoy watching him play," Ronaldo said.

"He is really good and in two or three years, he will be the best player in the world."

CONCACAF GOLD CUP USA, Panama meet in final

AFP, East Rutherford

The United States survived a scare from Honduras by scoring two late goals and will now face Panama in the Sunday's final of the CONCACAF Gold Cup football tournament.

In their third-ever Gold Cup meeting against Honduras, the Americans rallied with a pair of goals in the final four minutes to register a dramatic 2-1 win on Thursday at Giants Stadium.

Oguchi Onyewu's winning header in the dying seconds came just minutes after John O'Brien got the favoured Americans on the board for the first time. The US is ranked sixth in the world.

Ivan Guerrero opened the scoring for Honduras in the 31st minute.

In the other semi-final, Ricardo Phillips scored twice and Jorge Luis Dely Valdes added a single as Panama beat Colombia 3-2.

Jairo Leonardo Patino scored both goals for Colombia.

Phillips opened the scoring 12 minutes into the match for Panama who led 2-0 at the half.

He tallied his second goal at the 73rd minute to make it 3-1.

BCCI refuses ECB's Twenty20 request

Cricket

CRICINFO

The Indian cricket board has refused England's request to play Twenty20 international matches on its tour of India early next year. The ECB was keen for England to play Twenty20 matches in India, but India's board has rejected the proposal, because this form of cricket has not yet been played in India.

"ECB is anticipating that the England team will play three Tests and seven one-day internationals on next year's tour of India," said John Carr, ECB director of cricket operations, told the news agency IANS.

"ECB's understanding is that BCCI is not in favour of the Indian team playing Twenty20 international matches." He also added, according to a report in the Khaleej Times, that all seven one-day internationals would be played against India only - and not form part of a triangular series.

"We hope to play seven straight ODIs against India," said Carr "We are expecting a draft itinerary from BCCI within a couple of weeks and both boards will be keen to promptly confirm the itinerary."

This is not the first time that the

two boards have disagreed over proposed matches. In 2001, the ECB refused to play seven one-day internationals because its agreement with the BCCI, led by AC Muthiah at the time, had cited only five matches. After Jagmohan Dalmiya became BCCI president, he wanted England to play seven games of their tour. The ECB, however, did not change its stance.

Powell picked for SL tri-series

AFP, Kandy

Hard-hitting batsman Ricardo Powell has been added to the touring West Indian team for the one-day series against Sri Lanka and India starting later this month, a team official said.

Powell, 26, will join the 14 currently taking part in the second Test here for the tri-series to be played in Dambulla and Colombo from July 30 to August 9.

SQUAD

Shivnarine Chanderpaul (captain), Ryan Ramdass, Xavier Marshall, Sylvester Joseph, Runako Morton, Narsingh Deonarine, Denesh Ramdin, Omari Banks, Tino Best, Daren Powell, Jermaine Lawson, Ricardo Powell, Dwayne Smith, Kerry Jeremy, Deighton Butler

Aussies press

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Martyn not out 24
Clarke not out 22
Extras: (b-6, lb-2, nb-4) 12
Total: (For 3 wkts in 40 overs) 140
Fall of wkts: 1-18, 2-54, 3-100.

To bat: Katich, Gilchrist, Warne, Lee, Gillespie, McGrath.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Harmison	12	4	20	0
Hoggard	8	0	32	1
Flintoff	9	2	40	1
S Jones	8	0	30	0
Giles	2	0	10	0

Toss: Australia
Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (RSA), Aleem Dar (PAK)
TV umpire: Mark Benson (ENG)
Match referee: Ranjan Madugalle (SRI)

Karachi a no-go For Eng

Cricket

REUTERS, Karachi

England have rejected a proposal by Pakistan to play a second one-day international in the southern port city of Karachi on their tour this year in addition to the one already scheduled.

A Pakistani cricket official said on Friday that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), having refused to play a test match in Karachi, has now turned down a proposal to play another one-day game in the city during October-November.

"The itinerary should be finalised sometime next week. But what

is confirmed is they will only play one match in Karachi," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Director of Operations Abbas Zaidi told Reuters.

PCB Chairman Shaharyar Khan has been in London for the last two weeks trying to convince the ECB to play more games in Karachi, a city that has been the target of a series of militant attacks since the September 11, 2001 assaults on the United States.

Zaidi said England were now likely to play three Tests at Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad while out of five one-dayers, one would be in Karachi with two each in Rawalpindi and Lahore.

"They have security concerns about playing in Karachi which are tangible and we can't pressurise them on this issue," Zaidi said.

A PCB source said there was genuine concern that the tour could be affected by this month's London bomb blasts and the crackdown on militants in Pakistan.

Three of the four suspected suicide bombers in the July 7 London attacks were British Muslims of Pakistani origin.

After 9/11, Australia and West Indies cancelled cricket tours to Pakistan citing security and safety concerns, and the series were relocated to neutral venues.

South Africa also refused to play in Karachi in 2003 and last year India rejected a proposal for a Test match in Karachi.

Kumble's heart of teenager

AGENCIES, Bangalore

The buoyancy in Anil Kumble's voice announced that the 35-year-old has not lost his enthusiasm, the boyish zeal he had shown when he was picked for the 1990 tour of England. He was truly happy to be part of the squad for the triangular series in Sri Lanka.

"It is good to be part of the team. It is a good sign at the start of the season. I am looking forward to playing one-dayers and am hoping to contribute to the team," said an elated Kumble.

The suspense - whether he would be picked or not - that had kept him on tenterhooks throughout the conditioning and skills camps is no longer there. He spoke with the conviction of a man liberated.

That he may warm the benches, as he had done over two seasons when Harbhajan Singh was preferred instead of him, does not seem to hassle him. He looked at the positive side of being picked for the 12-day Lankan bash.

Alfaz gets MSC

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half-chance three minutes later. Alfaz put the ball into an empty net after snatching the ball from the edge of the area when Dipali goalie Titu and defender Domba fumbled to clear a backpass.

Alfaz, now the seven-goal top scorer, was dropped after the three-goal cushion but Mohammedann nearly lost it when their backline was tottering under tremendous pressure.

Ugandan forward Idris forced a smart one-handed save by Biplab while Rubel fired the ball over an empty net before reducing the arrears in the 64th minute. Rubel, who scored twice in the last two minutes to give Dipali only their second draw in the league in their previous appearance, leapt high into the air to head Farid's cross past Biplab for his fourth league goal.

The Black and Whites lived dangerously for the remainder of the match and had referee Abdur Rakib not ignored Dipali's appeals for penalties when Hassan and Odaf handled the ball inside the box, it could have been a totally different story.

Yellow cards: Tarek, Farid, Tajul (Dipali)

TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Biplab (Kamal), Nazrul, Odaf, Hassan, Kamal, Arman Aziz, Munna, Asad, Faisal, Alfaz (Rony) and Manju (Robert).

DIPALI: Titu (Sameer), Apu (Rajib), Domba, Abdullah, Tarek, Chanchal, Farid (Azad), Daulat, Tajul, Idris and Rubel.

Referee: Abdur Rakib.

Thorpe bows out as Thorpe

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surprise.

"He was never going to tour so he effectively announced his retirement without saying it at the start of the summer when he said he was going to Australia," Stewart said.

"He has been a great player and servant for England and since he came back from his injury and domestic problems a few years ago his performances have been fantastic," added Stewart, who himself played in 133 Tests.

"When Graham Thorpe is fit and playing well then he has been a nailed-on certainty to play for England, but now he has announced his retirement the team has to move on just like they did a few years ago when myself and Michael Atherton retired - it's down to the people who have come in now like Ian Bell and Kevin Pietersen."

Looking back, Stewart said: "I first saw Graham play when he was just 17 and had joined the Surrey staff and I have seen him mature

into a superb cricketer over the years who knew his game very well.

"If England were 20 for three, he was always a great person to walk out to the crease and his hundred on his debut for England against Australia was very special.

"I thought his century in Pakistan in 2000 when he barely scored a boundary was a typical Graham Thorpe innings and another century later that winter to steer us to victory against Sri Lanka in Colombo was another example of him at his best."

CAREER AT A GLANCE

FROM PAGE 12

1996 and Zimbabwe and New Zealand in 1996-97. He scored centuries in successive Tests in New Zealand.

1997: Hit 138 and shared in double-century stand with Nasser Hussain in England's surprise first Ashes Test victory at Edgbaston.

Registered 22 against Glamorgan at The Oval - and was also picked for fifth consecutive England tour and second in the Caribbean.

1998: Made 103 in a sixth-wicket stand of 205 with Mark Ramprakash at Bridgetown in fifth Test against West Indies.

1998-99: Toured Australia with England, hitting highest first-class score of 223 not out against South Australia in Adelaide.

1999: Played in England's unsuccessful World Cup campaign and also helped Surrey win their first county championship since 1971. After a moderate series for England against New Zealand, during which he stood in as captain for the second half of the nine-wicket defeat at Lord's, he announced he would be unavailable to tour South Africa.

2000: Battled his way back into the Test reckoning and secured a central contract after a summer which saw England beat Zimbabwe and the West Indies. Helped Surrey win their second consecutive county championship title.

2000-01: Became an integral part of England's winter of success in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, where Hussain's tourists came out on top in both Test tours to make it four consecutive series wins.

Hit the winning runs against Pakistan in Karachi where he made 64 not out and capped his winter with a man-of-the-match performance against Sri Lanka in the deciding Test in Colombo where he hit an unbeaten 113 in the first innings of a low-scoring game. March 19 - Chosen as captain for the one-day series in Sri Lanka to replace the injured Hussain.

2001: Calf injury and broken hand ruled him out of all but one match of the Ashes series, although awarded a central contract and shared in a record partnership for any wicket for England in Tests against Pakistan (267) with Michael Vaughan at Old Trafford. Voted man of the series against Pakistan.

Called up for England one-day tour to Zimbabwe but came home early from Test tour of India for personal reasons, although he returned for one-day clashes.

2002: Shared in record sixth-wicket stand against New Zealand with Andrew Flintoff in first Test - 281 - at Christchurch. His score of 200 not out beat his previous highest Test score, scored against Australia in 1997.

July 13 - Announced retirement from one-day international cricket.

July 29 - Announced his decision to take an immediate break from all cricket after an indifferent performance - he scored just five runs - in England's first Test victory over India at Lord's. Claimed he wanted to spend more time with his young family.

August 30 - Claimed he is ready to make a return to cricket, saying: "There is more clarity in my life and I can see the way forward."

September 10 - England selectors keep



Did U Know?

Steve Harmison's first five-wicket haul against Australia is his sixth in Test cricket. His previous best figures against Australia were 3 for 70 at Sydney in 2002-03.



Syed Kirmani
(Former Indian wicketkeeper)
"Every player is capable of scoring runs. A few players could run in to bad form or the entire team could have a bad patch. That is cricket. On the whole, we have an established batting line-up."