

## Anderson is ready

BBC ONLINE, undated

James Anderson's coach says the pace bowler can step up for England in the final Test if Simon Jones is unfit.

"I don't think he'll let anybody down if he's asked to do the job," said Lancashire's Mike Watkinson.

"He's been very steady this season, perhaps not as spectacular as he was in his early days but he's been given the new ball and been pretty dependable."

Anderson, 23, and all-rounder Paul Collingwood have been named as cover for Jones in the 13-man England squad.

The England players were gathering in London on Monday after having a few days break.

Jones was continuing to have treatment on his ankle problem and will be put through a rigorous bowling test on Tuesday.

Anderson burst onto the international scene in Australia in 2002, when he was pulled out of the England Academy to join the one-day side as injury cover.

He has played 12 Tests since, but has not built on that early potential, when he was able to gain late swing at good pace.

He took just two wickets in conceding 149 runs in his last Test appearance, replacing an injured Jones in Johannesburg in January.

This year he is Lancashire's leading wicket-taker in first-class cricket with 51, but at an average of 31.80.

"He had a rapid rise to the top in his early days," Watkinson told BBC Radio Five Live.

"And in recent times he's eased out of the picture to concentrate on county cricket and do more of that apprenticeship that he missed in the early days."

"He's in good form at the moment and I think he'll be fine."

Watkinson, an England assistant coach in the past, pointed out that Anderson still holds an England central contract.

And he believes the 23-year-old has always been part of the national side's long-term plans.

"One thing Jimmy has got is a big-match temperament, which we've seen [when he was] a youngster thrown out on the international stage," he added.

"The brief was: Go away, play some county cricket, you're still a centrally-contracted player, still in our thoughts and we'll bring you back in when we think the time's right."

"Perhaps this is the right time."



India's star Sania Mirza executing a forehand against Maria Sharapova of Russia at Flushing Meadows on Sunday.

PHOTOS: AFP

# Sania on the attack



AFP, New York

India's new idol Sania Mirza says she has no intention of abandoning her go-for-broke style of play as she looks to break into the world top 20.

The 18-year-old from Hyderabad gave a fair account of herself against top seed Maria Sharapova in her first appearance in a Grand Slam round of 16 here on Sunday, but after a bright start was overwhelmed 6-2, 6-1 by the Russian.

She was upbeat after the defeat saying that: "I had a lot of fun out there."

"First US Open, I don't think I can ask for more. Very happy."

"The score-line suggests it's two and one, but I think it was much closer than that. There were lots of deuces and advantages that I had."

For most of the 59-minute long match Mirza was able to match

Sharapova, one of the hardest hitters in the game, in the exchanges.

But her serve was fitful at best and once again her unforced errors were almost twice as high as her opponents.

In Mirza's tough two sets win over France's Marion Bartoli in the third round, she had an incredible 49 unforced error for 45 winners.

That reflects her natural attacking game and she scoffed at suggestions that it was time to take a more measured approach to the game.

"I think people have to accept that is the way I play. I'm not going to win matches by moonballing. I'm not going to satisfy myself if I play like that."

"I enjoy hitting the ball hard as I can, I enjoy taking the risks and I believe that you always have to take risks."

She acknowledged however that her tennis is still a work in progress and that she needed to put in some

hard work if she wants to improve her game notably on her service action.

As usual Mirza drew a large crowd of Indian fans, this time to the Arthur Ashe Stadium court, to cheer her on. But apart from a break of serve against the Russian in the fifth game, they were seldom allowed to make their presence felt.

"I was expecting that," she said. "I knew it was going to be packed and I was expecting there was going to be a lot of crowd for me and her. So I was prepared for it mentally."

"It's nice to know that people really like you and they're really for you wherever you go."

Commenting on the first meeting between the two, Sharapova said that Mirza "was definitely great for the sport."

"Tennis is a very global sport. She's very young, has a great future ahead of her. Very big game. I think she needs experience, she'll learn," she said.

## Aussies weigh a fifth bowler up

BBC ONLINE, undated

Australia have not ruled out bringing in all-rounder Shane Watson for the final Ashes Test at The Oval.

The 24-year-old, who impressed in the C&G Trophy final on Saturday, was not in Australia's original 16-man squad.

But spokesman Jonathan Rose told BBC Sport Australia he did not rule out the possibility of selecting players from outside the squad for the decider.

Watson said: "I would love to play in the fifth Test. It is the biggest in Australian cricket for a long time."

Watson scored a quick-fire 25 for Hampshire in the C&G Trophy final before taking 3-34 in eight overs.

Australia have based their tremendous success over the last decade on playing four specialist bowlers, with wicket-keeper Adam Gilchrist operating as an all-rounder.

But Watson would add strength to the batting line-up and bowl some overs as well, which would mean Australia would be more happy to gamble on Glenn McGrath's fitness as they would be able to reduce his workload.

## Metro TT

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Bristi of Lalbagh Academy became women's unseeded singles champion of the Metro Group Open table tennis tournament defeating her teammate Binti 4-3 at the Woodend-Floor Gymnasium on Monday.

Abahani clinched the women's group event outplaying Pataukhali 3-0.

In the boys' group final, Narail and Barna TT Club won their respective matches against Jagoroni and Biman respectively.

## Bashar rushes

FROM PAGE 12

The main source of inspiration to me, is lying in a hospital bed."

Former Bangladesh captain Khaled Mahmud, Rajin Saleh, left-arm spinner Abdur Razzak Raj and pacer Nazmul Hossain also returned home yesterday.

## Venus wins

FROM PAGE 12

looked like it (she was not fully fit). So I guess I was a lucky girl."

Mirza is probably the only women's tennis player who can rival Sharapova's global marketing potential thanks to her enormous Indian fanbase and she also has a forehand of Sharapova-like proportions.

The Russian was at times out-of-hit by her fellow 18-year-old in the first set but too many unforced errors by the first Indian woman to reach the fourth round of a grand slam proved to be her undoing.

"I'm playing pretty well," said Sharapova, the 2004 Wimbledon champion.

"I know it's going to get tougher and tougher from here."

Mirza said: "There were a lot of games that I could have taken but I had fun out there. In my first US Open I couldn't have asked for any more."

Sharapova will play compatriot and ninth seed Nadia Petrova in the last eight, a repeat of their Wimbledon quarterfinal this year which Sharapova won in straight sets.

Petrova, who has never won a tour title, reached the quarterfinals for the second consecutive year with a 7-6, 7-5 victory over temperamental 16-year-old Czech Nicole Pietrangeli.

Federer almost lost his first set of the tournament when he trailed 4-1 in the second set tiebreak against Rochus, his former junior doubles partner.

The Swiss will play German Nicolas Pietrangeli, who beat Arnaud Clement of France in four sets, in the last 16.

Federer beat Kiefer in four sets on his way to winning Wimbledon this year.

"I expect a tough one," said the top seed.

"He's been improving the last few months."

Hewitt eventually quelled Dent 6-3, 3-6, 6-7, 6-2, 7-5 on a breezy Arthur Ashe Court.

"It was an extremely tough match," admitted the Australian.

"I really had to earn it. I felt like there were a lot of areas of my game that weren't quite clicking today."

The 2001 champion will play Slovakia's Dominik Hrbaty in the fourth round. Hrbaty, seeded 15, beat David Ferrer of Spain in four sets on Sunday.

Jarkko Nieminen became only the second Finnish man to reach the fourth round at a Grand Slam event, and the first at the US Open, when he beat Belarus's Max Mirnyi 6-3, 7-6, 3-6, 6-3.

Spain's Fernando Verdasco is the Finn's fourth round opponent. He fought out a five-set win over Serbia and Montenegrin teenager Novak Djokovic.

Davide Sanguinetti became the first Italian to reach the last 16 of the men's singles for 11 years after an epic four-hour, 24-minute 6-3, 4-6, 7-7, 7-6, 7-6 win over Thailand's Paradorn Srichaphan.

# Too rich for comfort?

REUTERS, Brasilia



Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira has an embarrassment of riches.

One of the following five players has to be left out of the team: Ronaldo, Adriano, Ronaldinho, Kaka, Robinho.

So far, coach Parreira has been spared having to make the decision.

Ronaldo made it for him by asking to be rested from the Confederations Cup in June, then Ronaldinho was suspended from Sunday's 5-0 win over Chile.

The recent emergence of Robinho and Adriano as world class players has left Parreira in a quandary.

Usually seen as a somewhat unadventurous type, Parreira reshuffled his side earlier this year and effectively fielded four strikers to accommodate as many of Brazil's world class forwards as possible.

Playing all five together -- the so-called Magic Quintet -- is not

regarded feasible by Parreira as it would leave the team too vulnerable at the back, although some commentators are suggesting he should give it a go.

Until Sunday, Adriano and Robinho would still have been favourites to sit out the start.

But, as at last year's Copa America when he finished as top scorer with seven goals and this year's Confederations Cup when he scored five, Adriano grabbed his chance with both hands by blasting a hat-trick.

The victory over Chile secured the World Cup holders a place in next year's finals.

"The important thing was that we qualified," Adriano said. "I hope to continue like this, keep working away quietly and slowly but surely I'll get there."

Robinho furthered his claim by scoring one himself and laid on two of Adriano's goals.

Adriano's hat-trick, his second for Brazil, took his international tally to 20 in 28 matches.

Once described as a horse by Parreira because of his sheer

physical strength, Adriano has notched seven goals in his last four outings.

On the other hand, Ronaldo, his striking partner on Sunday, completed his sixth international without hitting the target.

Ronaldo, whose last goal was against Venezuela in October 2004, went off at halftime with a minor muscle problem and must now be wondering if he could be the victim.

The Phenomenal One has already expressed regret at his decision to skip the Confederations Cup, when Adriano took his place and terrorised opposing defences.

"I don't want to be rested again, I always want to be with the Brazil team," he confessed last week.

Robinho said he had no idea who he would take out.

"There are five excellent players there and it's the sort of problem every coach would like to have," he said.

"It's Parreira's job to decide but whoever he chooses, Brazil is ready for anyone."

# How Europe looks

REUTERS, London



Group-by-group analysis of European World Cup qualifying after 21 of Saturday's 22 matches and ahead of a further 24 being played on Wednesday:

The eight group winners and two best runners-up qualify automatically for the 2006 finals in Germany. The six other runners-up will play off for three further places. Teams finishing level on points will be divided first by their head-to-head records.

Because some groups contain six teams and others seven, the best runners-up will be determined by their results against the teams finishing first, third, fourth, fifth and sixth in each group.

## GROUP ONE

The group swung decisively in favour of the Netherlands on Saturday as their initially unimpressive 1-0 win in Armenia was given extra gravitas by the Czech Republic's later 2-0 defeat in Romania.

The Dutch, who won with a Ruud van Nistelrooy goal, now have 25 points from nine and a guaranteed at least a place in the playoffs. They should move to 28 when they host Andorra on Wednesday.

Romania ended the Czechs' seven-game qualification winning run with two goals by Adrian Mutu to move to 22 points - but have only one game left, away to Finland in October.

The Czech Republic have 21 from nine but should move back into second place on Wednesday when they host Armenia before their big one at home to the Netherlands next month.

## GROUP TWO

An amazing, roller-coaster of a day ended with Ukraine through to the finals for the first time in their history and three more teams battling it out for second.

The former Soviet State thought they had done enough when Ruslan Rotan's goal had them ahead in Georgia until Georgi Gakhokidze snatched a last-minute equaliser.

Ukraine travelled home on 24 points thinking they would have work to do in their final two games only for Denmark to send

them through by snatching an injury-time 2-2 draw in Turkey.

Turkey, who go to Kiev on Wednesday, have 17 points from 10 games with European champions Greece, who visit Kaza-khstan, on 15 from nine. The Greeks are the only team who can match Ukraine's tally but having drawn with them and lost to them, have an inferior head to head record.

Denmark, who host Georgia in midweek, have 13 points from nine.

## GROUP THREE

Portugal look certain qualifiers after thrashing Luxembourg 6-0 with two goals each for Pauleta and Simao, though they will find things a bit tougher in Russia on Wednesday.

Portugal have 23 points from nine games and still have home matches against Liechtenstein and Latvia in the pipeline.

Russia joined Slovakia on 18 from nine games after their 2-0 home win against Liechtenstein.

On Wednesday Slovakia visit Latvia, who saw their slim hopes vanish with a 2-1 defeat in Estonia.

## GROUP FOUR

This remains the tightest of the European groups with one point dividing the unbeaten top four.

France's 3-0 home win over the Faroe Islands moved them to 13 points, alongside Ireland, who they face in Dublin on Wednesday.

Switzerland complete the trio after their 1-1 home draw with Israel, who remain very much in the hunt on 12 from one more game than the top three but with two matches against the Faroes to come.

The Swiss visit Cyprus on Wednesday when Israel play the Faroes away but this one seems certain to go all the way to the last round of October 12.

## GROUP FIVE

Italy remain top after their 1-1 comeback draw in Scotland but Norway closed ground with an injury-time 3-2 win in Slovenia.

Italy, who visit Belarus on Wednesday, still look good on 14 points but Norway are now within striking range on 12, although they have an inferior head to head record with the Italians.

Slovenia have nine and will expect to add three more in Moldova on Wednesday. Norway have a tougher job against a Scotland team who have new hope on seven, the same as Belarus after the former Soviet state's surprise 2-0 defeat in Moldova.

All teams in the group have three games remaining.

## GROUP SIX

No change at the top as Poland and England both collected narrow wins.

Poland beat Austria 3-2 at home to move to 21 points from eight games, with England on 19 from seven after their 1-0 win in Wales.

The Poles are at home again on Wednesday, against Wales, while England face another local test in Northern Ireland - with both leading teams entitled to expect further success.

The top two meet in the final round in Manchester on October 12 but if they both keep winning they could both go through, one as a best runner-up, to take the sting out of the showdown.

## GROUP SEVEN

Serbia & Montenegro moved top on 15 points after their 2-0 home win over Lithuania stretched their run to seven matches without conceding a goal, a qualifying competition record.

They now travel to Spain, second on 13, on Wednesday, well aware that a draw will make them favourites to top the group.

Bosnia moved to 10 points after beating Belgium and retain a slither of interest, as do Lithuania (nine) who they visit on Wednesday.

## GROUP EIGHT

Top two Sweden and Croatia both won to keep it just a point between them with three games each remaining.

Croatia have 19 points after coming from behind to win 3-1 in Iceland, with the Swedes on 18 after beating Bulgaria 3-0 again - as they did in Sofia in March.

With Croatia visiting Malta and Sweden in Hungary, two more wins can be expected on Wednesday - leaving the October 8 clash between the leaders in Zagreb likely to be decisive.

## Gibbs, Boje not coming to India

CRICINFO, undated

Herschelle Gibbs and Nicky Boje have pulled out of South Africa's forthcoming tour to India in November.

It is possible that the Delhi Police might question the two cricketers for their alleged involvement in the match-fixing scandal.

Both players had pulled out of the last year's Test tour to India after the Delhi Police, which was responsible for cracking the case in 2000, did not give an assurance they would not be questioned or arrested.

Their denial on accepting money to underperform in ODIs on South Africa's tour of India in 2000-01, is apparently yet to convince the Indian authorities.

Gerald Majola, the chief executive of the United Cricket Board (UCB) of South Africa said that they hadn't been given an assurance regarding the safety of Gibbs and Boje despite repeated efforts.

## With or without

FROM PAGE 12

leading Bangladesh to the SAFF Championship on home soil in January, 2003, the Reds lost four out of ten matches to bury their aspirations.

On Monday, there was no lack of motivation in their last game against the lowly opponents and the full-strength Muktiyoddha stormed to a 5-0 first-half lead.

Striker Kanchan opened the floodgates in the 15th minute with a left-foot placing shot and he added another in the 33rd minute.

The energetic forward has scored 10 goals, one less than top-scorer Brothers Union's Russian hit-man Victor Edwards.

Nigerian strikers Paul and Jeremiah netted one each beside young Enamul before the lemon break.

Muktiyoddha midfielder Biddut got on the scoresheet in the 79th minute. It was Masud Alam who scored a consolation goal for Wanderers on the stroke of the final whistle.

## Cricket

REUTERS, London

One match to go and the scoreline could not be more intriguing: England 2, Shane Warne 1.

That, at least, is how it feels. Australia's leg-spinner could yet end up on the losing side even though the 2005 Ashes have revolved more around him than any other player.

His performances, like so many of his deliveries, have defied belief.

Ask England's left-handed opener Andrew Strauss, who shouldered arms to Warne's 'Ball of the New Century' at Edgbaston and saw it dart impossibly across his front pad and hit leg stump.

Ask England's all-conquering fast bowlers who have had more problems getting him out than almost any other Australian. Sports psychologists say that perfect preparation feeds perfect performance.

Warne prepared for the Ashes by losing a wife and family. Simone, tired of newspaper reports of her husband's liaisons, turned her back on a new life in England and returned home with the couple's three children.

In response, 99 players out of 100 would have withdrawn from the tour. Warne has not only played, he has put together a series to rival the one he enjoyed in 1993.

Then, he had bowled his original 'Ball of the Century' to dismiss Mike Gatting on the way to 34 wickets at 25.79 runs apiece in six matches.

# Cameroon edge nearer

AFP, Abidjan



Alioum Saidou was the Cameroon hero as they edged Ivory Coast 3-2 Sunday to close on a fifth consecutive appearance at the World Cup finals.

Saidou snatched the winner after 85 minutes of a Group 3 thriller in the Atlantic city after Achille Webo had twice put Cameroon ahead and Didier Drogba had levelled twice.

A 30-metre Cameroon free kick eluded goalkeeper Gerard Gnanhouan, struck the base of a post and rebounded to Saidou, whose brave diving header under pressure from an Ivorian defender flew into the net.

It was a dramatic end to a wonderful advertisement for African football as a capacity 40,000 crowd at Felix Houphouet-Boigny Stadium watched two of the best national teams on the continent slug it out blow for blow.

Victory lifted Cameroon one point above Ivory Coast to the top of the table with 20 points and a home

win over Egypt next month will take the 'Indomitable Lions' to the World Cup in Germany.

Ivory Coast complete their 10-match programme away to Sudan, who impressed when holding Libya goalless in Tripoli Friday, and will probably have to settle for the consolation prize of a place at the 2006 African Nations Cup.

Among the crowd were Roman Abramovich and Jose Mourinho, owner and coach respectively of English Premiership champions Chelsea, who flew to west Africa by private jet to support dreadlocked Drogba.

Cameroon and Barcelona striker Samuel Eto'o promised each player a 2,000-dollar bonus if they won and there was recall for veteran defender Raymond Kalla, who last played for his country at the 2002 World Cup.

Regular Ivory Coast goalkeeper Jean-Jacques Tizie failed a late fitness test, opening the door for France-based Gnanhouan as Ivory Coast defended a record of not conceding a goal at home in four previous qualifiers. Webto from Spanish club

Osasuna ended that record after 30 minutes, stretching his left foot to lob the ball over the stranded goalkeeper despite pressure from Arsenal defender Kolo Toure.

Drogba equalised eight minutes later with a snap close-range shot wide of Souleymanou Hamidou after fellow striker Aruna Dindane had weaved his way past veteran Cameroon defender