

Watson promises to do a Flintoff

HERALD SUN, Melbourne

Australia's great hope to fill the all-rounder's role in Test and one-day cricket has boldly declared he can be as good as England superstar Andrew Flintoff.

On the eve of the first game of the Johnnie Walker Super Series at Telstra Dome, Shane Watson said he was on track to answer Ricky Ponting's prayers for a world-class all-rounder.

"He's four years older than me and I know I'll get there," Watson, 24, said. "That's where I want to be. And with the people around me, my work ethic and the desperation I have to get to Flintoff's level, I know I'll get there."

Ponting and the selectors believe Watson has the talent to fill that much-needed spot in the middle order and provide options with the ball.

"My batting is up to being in the top six and my bowling is on the improve," Watson said.

"I know I am a good contributor and I back my ability."

Watson's confidence would be music to Ponting's ears.

The Australian captain said last week he would have dearly loved the option of having a genuine all-rounder during the Ashes series.

Watson has been chosen for both squads for the Super Series and will almost certainly play in the one-off Test at the SCG from October 14-19.

Rana

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The other bright female performers were Ansars' Laboni Akhtar Jui (five gold medals) and Dolly Akhtar of BJMC (four gold, two silver), who were also involved in record breaking runs on Tuesday in the 400m individual medley and 100m freestyle events respectively. Dolly, another Kushtia swimmer, also captured the 200m breaststroke gold on the day.

The water-polo title and all three diving gold medals went to Army. Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF) President and the Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral M Hasan Ali Khan distributed prizes at the closing ceremony.

Although the championships saw a total of 16 new national records, the participants showed their unhappiness over the federation's using hand timing in the era of nanotech.

"We can never be certain of our real standard in hand timing. We can also not judge our improvement in this way. That is the reason why we even fail to impress in international competitions," was the common complaint of the leading swimmers.

The federation has repeatedly promised to introduce electronic timing but it has totally failed to keep its promise.

Backstroke specialist Rubel and freestyle swimmer Jewel, meanwhile, both hoped that they would bring the country SA Games gold medals in their pet events.

"The only thing that worries me is that we have to train in winter and there is no heating system in our pools," Rubel told reporters.

Jewel added that it would be better if they prepare in abroad for next April's SA Games in Colombo.

The BSF general secretary Shahabuddin Ahmed, however, informed that the Army swimming pool has already introduced heating system and there would be no problem in training.



Did U Know?

It was at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games that women were first allowed to compete in track and field events despite objections from the Pope.



Jose Mourinho

(Chelsea manager)

"It's eight matches, eight victories, 18 goals - I think it's time to respect my players, my team and Chelsea Football Club." **After beating Liverpool 4-1 in the Premiership.**

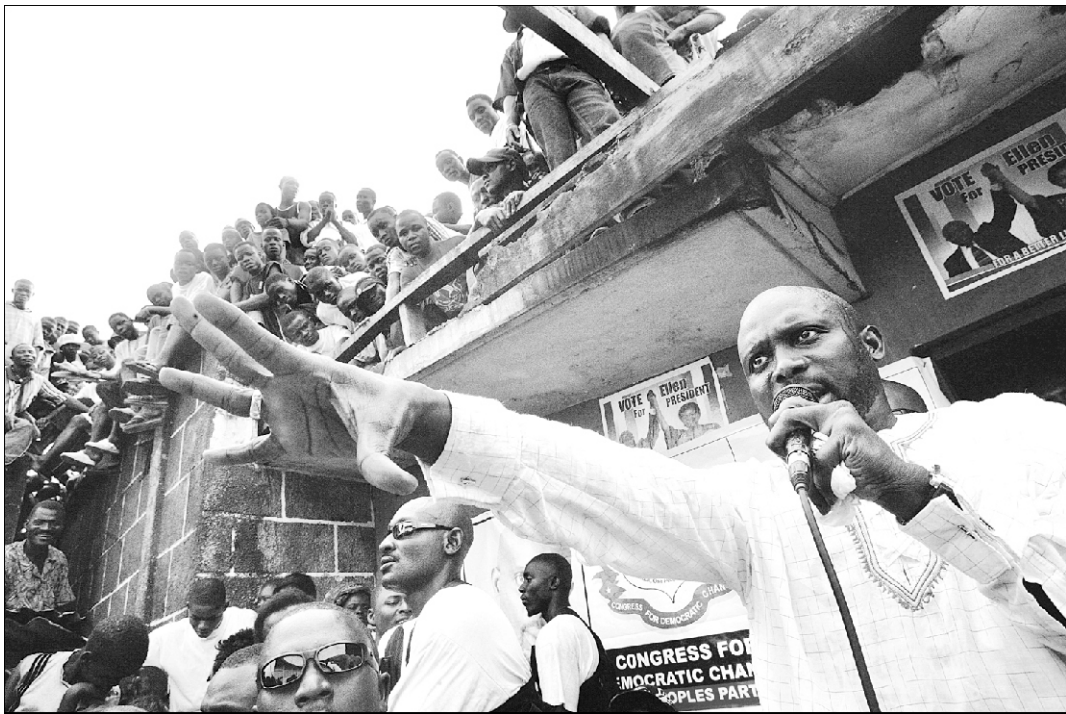


PHOTO: AFP

WEAH FOR PRESIDENT! Liberian football legend George Weah (R) campaigns in Monrovia for Liberia's presidential elections. War-torn Liberia is three weeks from a vote to choose its first elected government in eight years, with polls showing the former AC Milan superstar Weah losing ground but remaining atop the field of 22 presidential candidates. Though Weah remains the odds-on favorite to take first in the October 11 election if not win an absolute majority, mandating a second round in early November, his closest rivals are closing the gap in the provinces. Weah was the former striker of Paris St. Germain and AC Milan, and the only African ever to win FIFA's Footballer of the Year Award in 1995. An idol in Liberia, where he is known as "King George".

Fight fire with fire: Bari



AFP, Karachi

Pakistan's chief cricket selector Wasim Bari said the team would need to be on top form to beat an England side boosted by their historic Ashes win against Australia.

"Pakistan need to be at their best to beat England. There is no doubt they are capable of giving a tough fight and if they show the confidence they exuded in India they can come out winners," Wasim Bari said on Tuesday.

Beaten 2-1 in the home series by India last year and then routed 3-0 by Australia, Pakistan went on to level their Test series in India and the West Indies earlier this year.

"Pakistan have been improving and I am sure they will give England a run for their money. It's going to be a very tough and exciting series," said Bari, who played 81 Tests for Pakistan as a wicketkeeper.

Bari praised England as a confident, all-round team.

"Under Michael Vaughan England is

now a very balanced team and is playing cricket with confidence, which is the most important element in any sport," said Bari, also a former Pakistan captain.

England upset the odds to wrest back the coveted Ashes from Australia last month, their first Ashes win for 18 years.

They are now looking to a winter on the subcontinent -- during which they will tour Pakistan from later this month and India early next year -- to contest Australia's position at the top of the world rankings.

Bari warned that England's bowling attack will be equally potent on the flat pitches common in India and Pakistan.

"In Steve Harmison they have a really quick bowler and in Simon Jones, Andrew Flintoff and Matthew Hoggard they have quality swing bowlers, so their pace attack is world class, even on the flat tracks," he said.

"We too have a very good attack and fortunately the fitness level of Shoaib Akhtar, Mohammad Sami and Umar Gul is very high and Pakistan attack will match England in strength."

Bari, also the head of selectors when

Pakistan lost their last home series against England in 2000, refused to divulge his team's plans to tackle England.

"We are open to suggestion and want to give a balanced squad to captain Inzamamul Haq and coach Bob Woolmer. It's their decision what combination they want to play," he said.

But he said Pakistan needed to play five bowlers to beat England, describing the series as a huge challenge.

"Against England you need to play five bowlers and that's where Australia lacked in the Ashes," said Bari.

"Pakistan need to exert pressure from the day one of the series and need to play well on all five days of all three Tests to win the series."

Bari's three-member selection committee will pick the Pakistan squad after three trial matches later this month.

England arrive on October 26 and play the first Test in Multan from November 12 followed by Tests in Faisalabad and Lahore. They will then play five one-day matches.

Ponting bat batting him into trouble



MELBOURNE

Ricky Ponting could find himself in another controversy as his carbon graphite-reinforced bat comes under renewed scrutiny.

Having just weathered calls for his sacking as Australian captain after losing the Ashes, there are claims Ponting's Kookaburra bat will be banned by the International Cricket Council and the Marylebone Cricket Club.

A rival manufacturer claims it has been told the bat will be banned and warned not to reinforce any of its new range.

But Kookaburra Monday night said it was still awaiting an official answer.

Former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar, who is the chairman of a

sub-committee established to examine the issue, has inspected the bat and said he will make a final ruling at a December meeting.

Gavaskar said he was awaiting a full report from the MCC, the game's lawmakers.

"We just have to tread the line very carefully and make sure we get it right," he said.

The bat -- dubbed the "Kahuna" -- was under review because of fears it was giving batsmen an unfair advantage in power.

Kookaburra continues to deny this. Managing director Rob Elliot maintained there was no basis upon which to impose a ban.

"All the evidence we have sought from independent experts, such as industrial chemists, people who are experts in bonding, suggest it is nothing more than a coating on the bat," he

said.

A meeting of the ICC's cricket playing committee in May gave Ponting permission to keep using the bat in the Ashes series while the sub-committee started its investigation.

The committee is looking into various issues including the use of carbon graphite, the width and depth of bats and "corking" -- a practice also linked to baseball where the inside of a bat is replaced by cork to make it lighter and easier to swing.

The development of bats is a concern for the game's governing body.

ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed wouldn't discuss the matter, but said in May: "The ICC is growing increasingly concerned with issues surrounding the way in which bats are manufactured and enhanced."

-- INTERNET SOURCE

Islamists don't scare Sania

AFP, Tokyo

India's teenage star Sania Mirza shrugged off Tuesday a threat from an Islamic militant organisation about her on-court outfits.

Shortly before a WTA event in Kolkata last month, the Jamat-e-Ulema group in Hyderabad issued a statement warning her to stop wearing short skirts and sleeveless shirts saying it was an affront to Islam.

Kolkata police had to provide extra security for Mirza to ensure nothing untoward happened during the 170,000-dollar tennis tournament.

"Yes, there was a group who are opposed to it," said Mirza after winning her first-round singles and doubles matches at the Japan Open, her first senior tournament in the country.

"But you just have to do what you have to do. I'm there to play tennis. I don't think I need to focus upon anything else that's happening around me," added the 18-year-old star.

Last year, Mirza became the first woman from India to capture a WTA Tour title, winning the doubles on home turf at Hyderabad.

She became the first Indian woman to reach the third round in her Grand Slam debut at the Australian Open in January this year and posted her first singles title, again at Hyderabad, the following month.

In her US Open debut, Mirza reached the fourth round to move up to her highest ever ranking of 34th in the world last month.

On Tuesday, Mirza appeared on the court wearing shorts and a shirt with sleeves to beat Vilmairie Castellvi of Puerto Rico 6-1, 6-3. She then teamed up with Israel's Shahar Peer to beat the American pair of Jill Craybas and Carly Gullickson 3-6, 6-3, 6-1.

SLC secretary passes away

BBC ONLINE/CRICINFO, undated

Sri Lanka Cricket secretary Tryphon Miranda died in London on Sunday at the age of 53 after suffering a heart attack.

Mirando was visiting his wife and two daughters, who are studying in England.

A Royal College alumnus, Mirando was a long standing member of Tamil Union Cricket and Athletic Club. He was a live wire at the club, being a former president and a past secretary. A charming personality, Mirando was also a good choir singer. At the time of his death, he was marketing director of Janashakthi Insurance Company Ltd and a director at Kotmale Company.

Mirando had been selected by sports minister Jeevaan Kumaratunga as part of an interim committee.

He was just settling into his post when police forced their way into Sri Lanka Cricket's offices just hours after the then chief executive Duleep Mendis resigned.

Cricket's great

FROM PAGE 12

and if it adds to the game and makes for better decisions without taking away too much of the human element and without stopping the game too much, then I'll all for it."

Chris Gayle and Makhaya Ntini have been left out of the world team for the opening one-dayer at Docklands Stadium.

So formidable is the World XI that the first nine batsmen in the order have scored Test centuries and England's Ashes hero Andrew Flintoff may be forced to bat as low as number seven.

Selector Sunil Gavaskar confirmed that Sri Lankan wicketkeeper Kumar Sangakkara will open the batting with India's Virender Sehwag in the first of three one-dayers here this week.

Ponting said all-rounder James Hopes and late inclusion fast bowler Stuart Clark would be missing, meaning that young leg-spinner Cameron White will get a run after replacing injured Brad Hogg on Monday.

Ponting said Simon Katich will open the batting with wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist. Katich gets his promotion up the order after long-time opener Matthew Hayden was dropped.

TEAMS

AUSTRALIA (from): RP Ponting (capt), AC Gilchrist, SM Katich, DR Martyn, A Symonds, MJ Clarke, MEK Hussey, SR Watson, CL White, B Lee, GD McGrath, NW Bracken.

ICC WORLD XI (from): SM Pollock (capt, South Africa), V Sehwag (India), KC Sangakkara (Sri Lanka), JH Kallis (South Africa), BC Lara (West Indies), KP Pietersen (England), A Flintoff (England), R Dravid (India), Shahid Afridi (Pakistan), DL Vettori (New Zealand), Shoaib Akhtar (Pakistan), M Muralitharan (Sri Lanka).

NB: Supersubs for each side to be named before toss.

Umpires: SJA Taufel (Australia) & Aleem Dar (Pakistan)

3rd umpire: RE Koertzen (South Africa)

Match referee: RS Madugalle (Sri Lanka)

Not at his Best!



Football

AFP, London

Troubled ex-Manchester United star George Best remained in intensive care in a London hospital on Tuesday but his condition was improving, the 59-year-old's doctor said.

Professor Roger Williams added that the suspected lung infection which prompted the hospitalisation last week was not directly linked to drinking by Best, who has battled alcoholism for decades.

The former Northern Ireland winger was in a "serious, but improving" condition at private Cromwell hospital, said Williams, who has cared for Best since he had a life-saving liver transplant in 2002.

Best had been "pretty miserable" when admitted to the hospital but was now "moderately cheerful", said Williams, adding that he hoped his patient would now stay off the drink.

"He can do it -- he did it before, get off the alcohol. He has had long spells when he does not drink," Williams told GMTV television.

Best, one of the most naturally gifted footballers of all time, began drinking heavily after he gave up playing, bringing a succession of health problems which led eventually to the liver transplant.

Williams said that Best was likely to remain in hospital for a week and most

likely had a lung infection.

He had been made more susceptible to such illnesses because of the side-effects of medicines to suppress the immune system and prevent his body rejecting the new liver, the doctor added.

Best's agent Phil Hughes said Monday that the former player had been lapsing "in and out of consciousness" and was "very weak".

"The doctors say he's on the mend,



GEORGE BEST

but he still doesn't look good to me," he said.

Spotted as a 15-year-old, Best made his debut for Manchester United two years later and swiftly became a huge star, helping the club claim the English league championship in 1965 and 1967 and the European Cup in 1968.

What's next?



Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid's Brazilian players are the centre of attention once again after a new round of comical goal celebrations during their side's 4-0 weekend win over Real Mallorca at the Bernabeu.

Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos and Julio Baptista scored all four Real goals against the islanders on Sunday and celebrated first by hopping up and down like kangaroos and then by playing leapfrog.

The previous week Ronaldo, Roberto Carlos and Robinho had caused offence to Alaves president Dimityr Piterman when they dived on to the ground and waved their arms and legs about in a dance they dubbed 'the cockroach'.

The celebrations drew an angry response from the outspoken Alaves chief who said that the trio had behaved like "circus clowns" and "needed their heads examined" following his side's 3-0

defeat.

Real Madrid midfielder Pablo Garcia said he had tried to prevent the latest round of celebrations, but was pushed away by Roberto Carlos when he tried to intervene.

"I tried to stop them," Garcia told sports daily Marca on Tuesday. "But they can do whatever they want as long as they don't harm anyone."

"They are just joking about because that's the way the Brazilians are -- they're different and always happy."

Atletico Madrid striker Fernando Torres was also in hot water for his goal celebration in his side's 2-0 win over Malaga on Sunday.

The Spanish international was bombarded with plastic bottles thrown from by Malaga fans when he stuck his fingers in his ears and poked out his tongue after scoring a penalty against the Andalusians.

Torres said the celebration had been a joke between him and former team mate Jorge who now plays for Celta Vigo.

No easy way for English teams



UEFA CUP

AFP, Nyon

English Premiership sides Middlesbrough and Bolton were both handed tough draws for the group stage of the UEFA Cup made here on Tuesday.

Middlesbrough will face last season's semi-finalists AZ Alkmaar in Group D, and are also up against Ukrainian side Dnepropetrovsk, who hammered Hibernian 5-1 on aggregate in the first round, Swiss side Grasshopper Zurich and Litex Lovech of Bulgaria.

Turkish side Besiktas are the top side in Bolton's group H which also includes Spanish side Sevilla, Russia's Zenit St. Petersburg and Vitoria Guimaraes of

Portugal.

Bolton manager Sam Allardyce said: "We are in an excellent group with some very good sides who will make it difficult for us."

"At this level all matches will be hard but we are here on merit and we look forward to seeing where we might be travelling in Europe."

UEFA Cup holders CSKA Moscow have drawn French side Marseille in Group F, Dutch outfit Heerenveen and Bulgarian's Levski Sofia and Dinamo Bucharest of Romania.

Marseille president Pape Diouf remains confident of his side progressing.

"It's a very evenly balanced draw without anyone spectacular. But we're up against the title-holders all the same. But we have our chances of qualifying if

Voted European Player of the Year in 1968, Best's ability, coupled with his good looks and sometimes wild temperament, led him into a party-going lifestyle which took an increasing toll on his career.

Aged just 26, Best walked out of Manchester United and top class football, despite another decade playing at smaller clubs in England, Scotland and the United States.

He then fully embraced a hard-living lifestyle, epitomised by a - perhaps apocryphal - tale recounted often by Best.

According to the story, in the early 1970s a bellboy brought breakfast to Best's hotel room to see the drunk ex-player in bed with the current Miss World, a magnum of champagne and a large sum of cash won from the previous night of gambling.

"George, where did it all go wrong?" the bellboy is supposed to have exclaimed.

In fact, Best's life became increasingly difficult as his health failed and he had a number of brushes with the law, including convictions for drink-driving.

Less than a year after his liver transplant, Best was drinking again, prompting criticism from medical specialists that he risked putting people off organ donation.

Top Italian coach dies

AFP, Rome

The former coach of Tunisia, Italian Franco Scoglio, died from a heart-attack while taking part in a live-television show in Genoa on Monday.

The 64-year-old Scoglio collapsed from his chair while being interviewed by the Primocanale local sports channel.

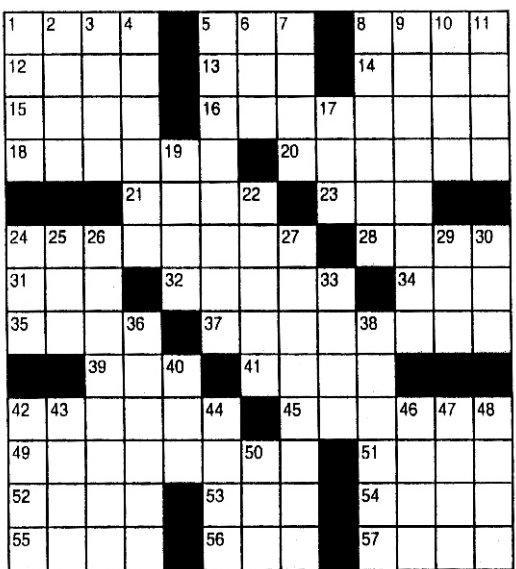
He had been in charge of the Genoa football club and took them into the Italian first division in 1988 before taking over as the coach of the Tunisian national side from 1998 until 2001.

He was briefly in charge of Libya after that but switched to become a television commentator.

Scoglio had been considering a return to coaching and it was believed he had been in touch with Algeria and Senegal.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37 Send	2 Almost black	24 Irrigation project
1 Recognize	39 Actor Byrnes	3 Garfield's pal	25 Mountain of Crete
5 Stitch	41 Nothing in	4 Trounce	26 County of
8 Atomizer output	Nantes	5 Turned blue?	England
12 Zilch, in Yochimico	42 Matched	6 Inventor Whitney	27 Simplicity
13 Carte lead-in	45 Cancel	7 Clean	29 Karaoke prop, for short
14 "The — love belongs —"	51 Finished	8 Anchored	30 "Hum-bug!"
15 Satan's specialty	52 Lend a hand	9 Teach	33 Graf —
16 Sink	53 "Mayday!"	10 Close up	36 Skilled ones
18 Pupil's cover	54 Pro-tracted	11 Mah-jongg piece	38 Luanda's land
20 Fling forcefully	55 Shea team	17 Dog's kid	40 Md.
21 Draftable	56 Fellows	19 Mother of Don Juan	42 Leading man
23 Aplece	57 Farm group?	22 Moving about	43 Scoff
24 Give out	DOWN	1 Patella	44 T. in Morse code
28 Foolish	Solution time: 24 mins.		46 Revlon rival
31 Commotion			47 Bivouac shelter
32 Greek consonants			48 Work units
34 Spy org.			50 Miler Sebastian
35 Baby's first word, often			



CRYPTOQUIP

J L R T V S K W J F W P V F Z B

T L P J K M A S T A B W K U Q F

S B J F C A , Z T V O M R T V Z W O O

S B T A Q B T F J F C U J C Q T F A ? **Saturday's Cryptquip:** IFA GUY IS STUDYING MOUNTAIN-CLIMBING TECHNIQUES, COULD HE BE AIDED BY CLIFF NOTES?

Today's Cryptquip Clue: V equals U

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.