

Under-fire stars put NSW atop

AFP, Sydney

Em battled Australian Test stars Simon Katich and Michael Clarke both smashed centuries Tuesday to put New South Wales on top at stumps on the first day of the Sheffield Shield match against South Australia.

NSW skipper Katich and Clarke shared an unbroken 193-run third-wicket partnership against an under-strength SA attack to leave NSW at 338-2 at stumps, answering critics who have called for their Test spots to be reviewed.

Clarke, whose promotion to number four in the Test line-up has been criticised by some high-profile pundits, scored 115 not out from 170 balls with 13 fours and one six.

Katich, who was told by selectors that it was "time to deliver" after averaging 27.55 in the recent Ashes series, hit 16 fours and faced 246 balls for his unbeaten 139.

Katich, who made 0 and 2 and suffered a fractured finger in last week's Super Test against the World XI, needed a big score today with selectors due to announce the team on Thursday for the November 3-7 Test against West Indies in Brisbane.

NSW left-handed opener Phil Jaques hit eight fours and one six in his 104-ball knock before he was out after lunch.

The South Australian attack was missing injured Test duo Jason Gillespie and Shaun Tait.

Ward quits

AFP, London

Former England batsman Ian Ward has announced his retirement from first-class cricket to concentrate on his fledgling media career.

The 33-year-old, who won five Test caps in 2001, has decided not to see out the final two years of his contract with Sussex, whom he joined from Surrey last year in the hope of reviving his Test career.

"I have really enjoyed my time at Sussex and the club have been very good to me. I am disappointed I wasn't able to make more of a contribution this year," said Ward.

"I'd never missed a match through injury before so to miss so many games in the second half of the season was very frustrating.

"Sussex are a great county to play for and I know I'll miss it when the new season starts, especially the camaraderie in the dressing room and the adrenaline rush you get as an opening batsman facing quick bowlers."

Pakistan ready

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In Pakistan following a bombing outside the touring New Zealand team's hotel in 2002 which killed 14 people including 11 French engineers.

The security arrangements for the England tour extend to emergency evacuation plans in case of another earthquake.

Pakistani special forces troops will keep watch over the visitors' 14-man squad from the moment they arrive here Wednesday, and their hotel will be cordoned off by police.

Star all-rounder Andrew Flintoff and pace bowler Steve Harmison will arrive later in the week, after completing a fund-raising programme for quake victims in Dubai.

Salahuddin

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(SA Sultan). It is very appropriate," Salahuddin told on Tuesday referring to the football body's announcement.

"I also appreciate it but I need more time to think," he said when asked whether he would now consider coming back to the football's governing body once the BFF publicly said that it had realised its mistake.

Div selectors

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Sirajuddin Alamgir, Minhazul Abedin and Akram Khan.

KHULNA: Faruque Ahmed, Maruful Islam, Sheikh Salahuddin and Habibul Bashar.

RAJSHAH: GM Nawsher, Khondokar Maynul Islam, Wahidul Goni and Khaled Mashud.

SYLHET: GM Nawsher, Ahmed Arif, Golam Faruque Suru and Rajin Saleh.

Bon voyage

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Bangladesh Football Federation (BFF) bowed to the widespread media criticism and decided to honour the National Team Management Committee's (NTMC) recommendation to select Ashrafuddin Chunnun as team leader and Sayeed Hassan Kanan as manager.

Earlier BFF named Monir Ahmed as team leader and Ashrafuddin Chunnun as manager ignoring the NTMC's recommendation, which sparked off a resignation en masse from the NTMC. The two were finally renamed as national team officials on Monday.

The team management also includes Argentine coach Diego Cruciani, trainer Ariel Colman, assistant coach Jubair Nipu and physician Debashish Chowdhury.

Clarke suits No 4 fine



Cricket

AFP, Sydney

Australian batsman Michael Clarke has hit back at critics who say his swashbuckling style is unsuited to number four on the Test batting line-up.

The 24-year-old has come under fire since he was promoted from number six earlier this month when predecessor Damien Martyn became the scapegoat for Australia's first Ashes defeat in 16 years.

Mark Waugh, Australia's longest-serving number four, said Clarke's technique was too loose after he scored only 40 in two Test innings against the World XI this month.

Former Test player Kerry O'Keefe and Sheffield Shield veteran Jamie Cox have also questioned Clarke's credentials in the position ahead of a three Test

series against the West Indies beginning in Brisbane next week.

Clarke, who has been tipped as a future Australian captain, said he would not be changing his style, commenting: "It's got me this far."

He denied he was better suited to number six, where there is more margin for error, and said his experience playing number four at state level would stand him in good stead.

"That's my ideal position," he said in remarks published in The Sydney Morning Herald Tuesday. "It's where I've batted for New South Wales for a while and hopefully I can cement my spot there for Australia."

Clarke exploded onto the Test cricket scene last year with a hundred on debut against India and averaged almost 50 runs an innings during 2004.

But his average dropped to 30.13 in 2005 after he was contained by England's bowlers in the

Ashes.

"Through the Ashes, I felt I learnt a lot about my own game, had to work very hard to make runs over there and I think my batting is definitely improving," he said.

"I hope it continues to improve, I'm disappointed I haven't made a big score in Test cricket of late, but I feel like I'm hitting the ball pretty well and I've just got to try and go on with it when I get a start."

Clarke urged former players to contact him directly with criticisms of his style, rather than air their complaints publicly.

"They are entitled to their own opinion, no matter who it is. I'd probably like those sort of guys to give me a call, if they've got any ways of helping me and fixing my technique," he said.

"They get paid to write stories and say what they have to say, so I'll just continue working as hard as I can and hopefully prove a few people wrong."

Eriksson backs red Beckham

AFP, London

England coach Sven Goran Eriksson has come out in support of his captain David Beckham despite his weekend red card for Real Madrid.

Less than a month after becoming the first player in England history to be sent off twice -- for two yellow card offences in the win over Austria at Old Trafford -- the 31-year-old was sent packing in the surprise home defeat to Valencia on Sunday.

Beckham was dismissed in the same manner as Manchester United's Wayne Rooney last month, for sarcastically applauding the referee following a caution.

The incident raised obvious question marks over Beckham's attitude ahead of the 2006 World Cup in Germany.

But Eriksson said there was no chance of Beckham being replaced as captain.

"I don't have any problem with Beckham as captain," he said.

"I have not spoken to him about the dismissal. I don't know what happened but you do get sent off in football."

"He is going to be captain in Germany. These things happen in football, they always happen."

"My advice to all the players before every game is that we want to win but to finish the game with 11. It is much easier to win with 11 men."

Roma fined

AFP, Rome

The Italian football league on Tuesday fined Serie A club Roma 25,000 euros (30,000 dollars) after referee Gianluca Paparesta was hit in the face by a coin during Sunday's derby against Lazio.

Paparesta was struck by the coin thrown from a section full of Roma fans in the east enclosure after awarding a free-kick to Lazio.

He suffered a small cut but carried on refereeing the game which ended in a 1-1 draw.

Roma fans have been in trouble before at the Olympic stadium.

The same fixture had to be abandoned in March 2004 when fans went on the rampage after a false rumour spread that a young boy had been killed by a police car outside the stadium.

And in September of the same year a Champions League match against Dynamo Kiev was abandoned at half-time after Swedish referee Anders Frisk was hit by a coin.

The club were forced by UEFA, European football's governing body, to play their next two home European matches behind closed doors.

Adriano suffers injury

AFP, Milan

Inter Milan's Brazilian international Adriano, injured during their 1-0 victory at Udinese over the weekend, has suffered a dislocated right shoulder, the Italian first division club said on Monday.

He will miss Inter's next two matches, against AS Roma on Wednesday and then at Sampdoria on Sunday, but should be back in time for their home Champions League clash against FC Porto the following week.

"I was a little worried after my fall yesterday (Sunday) but after the medical tests I'm reassured," said Adriano. "Now I'm just going to do my best to get fit as quickly as possible."

Simmons doesn't

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body that employed him only last year as official national coach to replace Australian Geoff Marsh, stating he is no longer employed by them.

He claims, however, that he has not been formally fired, although Kevin Curren was appointed in his place during the tour to Zimbabwe by India in September amid confusion.

Simmons, a former West Indies Test allrounder, told AFP: "I'm still waiting patiently to hear how Mr. Samkange has fared with the authorities. Meanwhile I am carrying on coaching unofficially, mainly among youngsters but with some players at the highest level here."

Simmons is scheduled to spend Tuesday coaching the under-19's. "I am looking forward to that, it is the work I know best," he said.

Simmons said he has no idea at this stage what will happen to him. "I am not even thinking about where I will go if I have to," he said. "Nor do I have any plans about how I will eventually deal with Zimbabwe Cricket about the remainder of my contract with them. I am keeping an open mind on everything."

The deportation order became known when he addressed a routine meeting of Zimbabwe provincial chairmen last week.

Be champs not chumps: Benitez



Football

AFP, Liverpool

Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez admits his European champions are playing like chumps in the English Premiership.

Five months after that amazing Champions League triumph over AC Milan in Istanbul, Liverpool are playing even worse than last season in the domestic competition.

"We must change our attitude. We must have the same attitude whether it is in the Premiership or the Carling Cup," he said.

Two wins from eight games, just five goals scored and 13th place in the Premiership tells its own story.

And it's one the mild-mannered Benitez doesn't like reading.

He has hit out at his foreign stars who are unwilling to put in the graft when it comes to the bread and butter of the Premiership.

The statistics say it all and the Reds won just two out of 14 league games after playing in the Champions League last season. This season is even worse and Liverpool have not won any of the five matches they played after featur-

ing in Europe.

It is Benitez's biggest challenge.

"It's the same all over the country and the fans want to win always," he said.

"We won the Champions League and the Super Cup and this season we want to win every competition we are in."

"So when people talk about the disappointment of the fans, we are all disappointed and we know we need to improve."

"I am always thinking how we can improve. We have some ideas and we try to explain these to the players, but the most important thing is to work hard on the pitch and on the training ground."

"You look at Fulham and we have better players than Fulham."

"We need to win these games if we are going to get to the top of the table."

Liverpool's goals -- or rather lack of them -- is their biggest problem and none of their strikers are firing.

Djibril Cisse looks their best bet but Benitez seems reluctant to give him a run of games and he has netted just twice in the league.

Fernando Morientes appears to be a shadow of the player who was rated one of the best in the business when he

joined Liverpool from Real Madrid in January.

Beanepole striker Peter Crouch has come in for the most stick and is still waiting for his first goal for Liverpool.

And the fans can't help but remember that Michael Owen was desperate to return to Anfield in the summer but Benitez snubbed him.

Benitez, who made his players sit through a video of the Fulham defeat on Sunday at training, believes his strikers will deliver, but says they need to work harder.

"Our attack has been bad but because the players up front are not moving enough," he said.

"We have the ball and we are creating opportunities, but the problem is we are not taking them."

"You look back at the Middlesbrough game and Steven Gerrard had seven chances to score."

"If he had taken one of them, things would be different and people would not be saying these things."

Liverpool fans will stick with Benitez, who faces a tricky Carling League Cup tie at Crystal Palace on Tuesday in the short term but the pressure is on him to prove that winning the Champions League was no fluke.

MU not strong enough



Football

AFP, London

Edwin van der Sar fears Manchester United's squad is not strong enough to cope with the injury crisis which has all but wrecked their Premiership title hopes.

United are without eight players including skipper Roy Keane, Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs and Gabriel Heinze and trail leaders Chelsea by 10 points after drawing against Spurs at the weekend.

And Van der Sar admits that United, who are relying on fringe players, lack the strength in depth to cope.

"We don't have too many substitutes who can change things around."

So those playing have to hold on until the injured and suspended players come back," the Holland goalkeeper said.

"And we must lose the least amount of points possible until the Chelsea game at the beginning of November."

Despite United's poor start to the new campaign, with just one win out of four Premiership fixtures at Old Trafford, van der Sar insists they will recover.

"There has to be more to come," he said. "Nobody at United is satisfied at the moment."

One player who has been a revelation is 20-year-old Phil Bardsley, who has been deputising at right-back for the injured Neville.

Bardsley has started four of United's last five games and revealed

his determination to become a long-term rival for Neville's place.

"I've been waiting for this for a long time," said Bardsley, who is likely to keep his players up front are the Carling League Cup visit of League Two strugglers Barnet.

"Now my chance has come, I want to carry on making progress and pushing for a regular place."

"It's miles different to playing in the reserves. The game is faster because the tempo is much higher and the occasion itself is completely different, too."

"Playing alongside the likes of Edwin and Rio Ferdinand is fantastic, and I can only gain experience from doing that."

Tendulkar back & bangs

FROM PAGE 12

Yuvraj b lbw b Dilshan	14
Dravid not out	85
Dhoni c Jayawardena b Fernando	38
Agarkar run out	1
Yadav not out	3
Extras: (lb-5, w-4, nb-4)	13
Total: (For 6 wickets in 50 overs)	350
Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-205, 3-207, 4-247, 5-316, 6-319	
Did not bat: Harbhajan, Rao, Sreesanth	
Super subs: Kartik replaced Rao	
Bowler	O M R W
Vaas	9 0 67 1
Maharoor	10 0 82 1
Fernando	10 0 66 1
Muralitharan	10 0 49 0
Dilshan	6 0 40 2
Chandana	5 0 41 0
SRILANKA	
Jayasuriya c Dravid b Harbhajan	27
Atapattu b Pathan	1
Sankarara c and b Sehwa	43
Chandana st Dhoni b Harbhajan	3
Jayawardena b Kartik	17

Arnold b Harbhajan	0
Dilshan b Kartik	23
Maharoor st Dhoni b Kartik	2
Vaas not out	37
Lokuhettige b Sreesanth	29
Muralitharan c Kartik b Sreesanth	6
Extras: (lb-2, w-6, nb-2)	10
Total: (All out in 35.4 overs)	198
Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-74, 3-76, 4-88, 5-88, 6-118, 7-121, 8-126, 9-189	
Super subs: Lokuhettige replaced Fernando	
Bowler	O M R W
Pathan	5 0 34 1
Sreesanth	5.4 0 39 2
Agarkar	3 0 20 0
Harbhajan	10 0 35 3
Schwag	3 1 20 1
Kartik	9 0 48 3
Result: India won by 152 runs.	
Man-of-the-match: Rahul Dravid.	
Toss: India.	
Umpires: Billy Bowden and Krishna Hariharan.	
Second match: Mohali, Oct 28.	

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37 Church donation	60 Type squares	12 Win big
1 Espionage org.	39 Skills	61 Cath. or Prot.	19 Hooter
4 Fool	41 Takes the wheel		21 Mauna
7 Butterfly-bait	43 Present decoration		23 Tripod
11 Easter entree	44 Hardly speare	DOWN	25 Press agent?
13 Last (Abbr.)	46 Swayze's movie	1 Woodwind instr.	26 Salaman-der
14 Depend (on)	50 Goya's "The Naked —"	2 Shake-speare villain	27 Comes together
15 Culture medium	53 Curved path	3 "Diary of — Housewife"	28 Automations.
16 White-wine aperitif	55 Between assignments	4 Diving bird	29 Monad
17 Wheel-base terminus	56 PC picture	5 Use a letter opener	30 Give as an example
18 Wild West show	57 Cistern	6 Knapsack part	31 Speck
20 Post-bath application	58 Snooker, e.g.	7 Become tyrannical	35 Coca-Cola product
22 Puncturing tool	59 Quest	8 Whammy	38 Historic period
28 Piercing fastener		9 Every last drop	40 Journal
32 "— Grows in Brooklyn"		10 Turn red?	42 Roofing material
33 "... with sugar —?"			45 It takes a beating
34 Obtained			47 Stench
36 Make like a werewolf			48 — gin fizz

Solution time: 24 mins.

SHEAF	SAMOA
SPONGE	AMOUNT
TASTER	MASTER
USED	DIAMON
USED	OLIVE
TELEK	RAW
CIE	ROB
FORCING	WELDS
ASEA	DAR
RCA	BOISOM
EASTER	BASTER
DROVES	ORALITY
SINARE	TYPES

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

T S J I Q T H A I U P Q N W J I

D J V C A U D C N W L N W T I Q Z J

A H Q, T ' Y L A Q H H T Z V J A P Y

E Q E A Z Z Q W U J I S A H T J I !
Saturday's Cryptquip: I INVITED THE WOMAN TO HELP ME USE THE CROWBAR BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO LEVER ALONE.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: Y equals D

The Cryptquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals Q, it will equal Q throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.