

Spin-heavy Proteas

AFP, Centurion

South Africa will pin their spin hopes in India later this month on an off-spinner who not much more than a year ago was a conventional medium-pacer.

Johan Botha, 23, was a moderately successful all-rounder for the Eastern Cape Warriors franchise when Mickey Arthur, who has subsequently become the South African team coach, suggested he should work on the off-spinners which he occasionally experimented with in the nets.

Botha is the only uncapped player in a 15-man squad that will depart Friday to play five one-day internationals.

Although he is inexperienced at top level, Botha could start as the team's main spin bowler. The other two spinners in the party, Robin Peterson and Justin Ontong, had poor tours when they played in a Test series in India last year.

If Botha gets the nod, he will come up against Harbhajan Singh, the man he modelled his spin bowling on -- even mastering a version of Harbhajan's "doosra", a delivery which spins towards leg with an off-break action.

SQUAD

Graeme Smith (captain), Jacques Kallis (vice-captain), Johan Botha, Mark Boucher, AB de Villiers, Andrew Hall, Justin Kemp, Charl Langeveldt, Albie Morkel, Andre Nel, Makhaya Ntini, Justin Ontong, Robin Peterson, Shaun Pollock, Ashwell Prince.

Sri Lanka pull

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Maharoor, named super-sub before the match, finished with 4-20 from five overs after replacing lanky left-armer Nuwan Zoysa as early as the 15th over.

Maharoor, who came on to bowl in the 37th over, halted India's charge from a promising 197-3 with the wickets of Gambhir, Venugopal Rao, Suresh Raina and Ajit Agarkar in successive overs.

India, however, plundered 34 runs in the last three overs to set Sri Lanka what appeared to be a formidable target of 5.8 runs an over.

The sixth match will be played in Rajkot on Wednesday and the seventh in Baroda next Saturday.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the fifth one-day international between India and Sri Lanka at the Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad on Sunday:

INDIA: 285 for 8 in 50 overs (Gambhir 103, Dravid 103 not out; Maharoor 4-20, Zoysa 2-29)

SRI LANKA

Sangakkara c Rao b Rudra	39
Jayasuriya c Rao b Agarkar	8
Tharanga c Sehwa b Agarkar	14
Jayawardena run out	37
Atapattu c and b Kartik	39
Dilshan not out	81
Arnold not out	49
Extras: (lb-3, w-13, nb-3)	19
Total: (For 5 wks in 47.4 overs)	286
Fall of wickets: 1-15, 2-61, 3-73, 4-143, 5-155	

Substitutes: Yadav replaced Dravid

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Agarkar	9.4	0	60	2
Rudra	9	1	54	1
Sreesanth	10	0	56	0
Yadav	7	0	44	0
Kartik	10	0	52	1
Sehwa	2	0	17	0

Result: Sri Lanka won by 5 wickets and India lead 7-ODI series 4-1.

Man-of-the-match: Tillekeratne Dilshan.

Next match: Rajkot, Nov.9.

Chelsea bubble

FROM PAGE 12

deservedly put United ahead with a looping far post header.

The Scotland midfielder escaped his marker at the far post to connect with Ronaldo's cross, but his header appeared to be too acute to find the net.

However, the ball looped high before dropping into the net at the far post beyond the head of Chelsea captain John Terry.

Buoyed by the goal, United continued to press Chelsea in the second-half and the home side wasted a golden chance to extend their lead on 54 minutes when Ruud van Nistelrooy fired over the crossbar from ten yards.

Wayne Rooney's floated pass had picked out Fletcher inside the penalty area, but the Scot's perfect pass to Van Nistelrooy lacked the finishing touch it deserved.

United couldn't afford to be so wasteful against a team of Chelsea's attacking threat and Drogha and Lampard both gave the home side worrying moments as the champions went in search of an equaliser.

Chelsea's onslaught continued and Lampard and Asier del Horno both went agonisingly close to equalising as United were pushed further and further back.

Lampard was brilliantly denied by van der Sar from close range on 68 minutes after good work by Drogha and full-back Del Horno then volleyed over the crossbar from six yards after racing onto Duff's cross.

Substitute Shaun Wright-Phillips then forced van der Sar into another fine save with a low strike from 25 yards, but United held out to seal a dramatic victory.

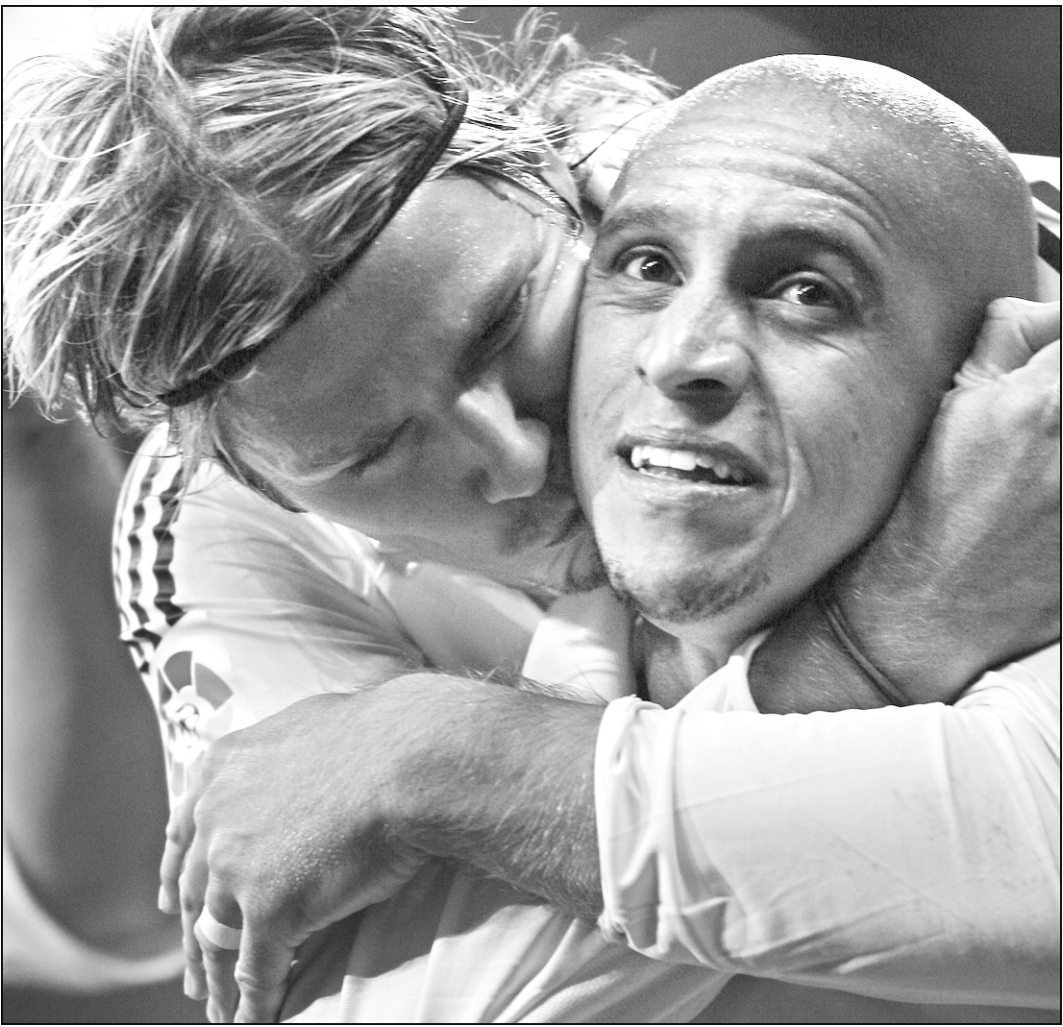


PHOTO: AFP

England's David Beckham shows his appreciation after Roberto Carlos scores the winner in Real Madrid's 1-0 win against Zaragoza at the Bernabeu stadium on November 6.

PRIMERA LIGA

Big two stay close



Football

AFP, Madrid

Spanish giants Barcelona and Real Madrid continued to keep in close contact with surprise league leaders Osasuna by both notching up victories on Sunday.

Reigning Spanish champions Barcelona romped to a comfortable 3-1 win at Getafe.

Samuel Eto'o took his season's tally to 10 goals when he found the net after barely a minute and then the African Player of the Year set up his teammate Ludovic Giuly for an easy second goal just after the hour.

Unfortunately, instead of sportingly applauding his outstanding performance, Eto'o had to suffer howls of racist abuse which lead to Getafe club officials to issue a plea over their loud-speaker system for their supporters to shut up.

Thiago Motta then added the Catalan club's third after 67 minutes with a stunning free kick.

However, Getafe's consolation three minutes from time by Mariano Pernia was worth the wait, the Argentine defender producing a blistering left foot volley from the edge of the area.

Barcelona now have 22 points from 11 games to stay in second place, two points behind Osasuna who won 2-1 at Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Real Madrid remain in third, one point further back, but were made to work much harder than their bitter rivals for their 1-0 victory over Real Zaragoza.

Roberto Carlos's penalty 12 minutes

from time gave them a barely deserved win, the Brazilian World Cup winner getting the only goal of the game after his compatriot Robinho had been brought down by Leonardo Ponzio.

The penalty-taking duties had fallen to Roberto Carlos only because Robinho himself had an effort from the spot saved by Zaragoza keeper Cesar Sanchez just five minutes earlier.

"I'm the one who decides who takes the penalties. When Robinho took the first one, it was me that told him to do it, and it was the same with Roberto Carlos," explained Real Madrid coach Wanderley Luxemburgo.

"The good thing is that Robinho still wanted to take the second and was annoyed when I said he couldn't."

"It shows personality but the danger, in a game as difficult as this one, is that you can't afford to get it wrong twice," added Luxemburgo.

Madrid had their moments prior to Roberto Carlos scoring with Robinho and Raul Gonzalez both going close, but Zaragoza were also unlucky not to take the lead when Diego Milito hit the crossbar 11 minutes into the second half.

"They had the best of the first half and we were best in the second, when we had some clear chances to score. We've now lost three games to penalties and we still haven't had one blown for us," reflected Zaragoza coach Victor Munoz bitterly.

One negative note for Madrid was English defender Jonathan Woodgate limped off after 23 minutes, adding to Madrid's longlist of injured players.

Woodgate suffered from continued problems with his left hamstring, which

he initially strained against Rosenberg in Real's 2-0 win in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Real medical officials said that they would be assessing the extent of the injury, which frustrated his anticipated England recall.

It also appeared to be bad night for the 80,000 Real fans who filled the Santiago Bernabeu to its capacity, most of whom didn't like what they saw and spent much of the second half jeering their team.

"The fans want us to play well and win, that's normal for a club like Real Madrid. It's something we understand and respect," acknowledged Luxemburgo, admitting that Real had been below-par despite picking up three points.

Celta Vigo continued their strong start to the season to move up to fourth after a 2-1 victory over struggling Alaves.

Nestor Cannobio opened the scoring from just inside the area after 27 minutes and Jonathan Aspas put Celta further ahead midway through the second half, scoring on the rebound after Borja Oubina had his penalty saved by Alaves keeper Franco Constanzo.

Martin Astudillo got one back for Alaves shortly afterwards but the Basques couldn't score again and remain anchored in the relegation zone, second from bottom.

TOP SIX											
Osasuna	11	8	0	3	16	11	24				
Barcelona	11	6	4	1	27	11	22				
Real Madrid	11	7	0	4	22	11	21				
Celta Vigo	11	6	2	3	14	11	20				
Villarreal	11	5	4	2	18	12	19				
Sevilla	11	4	5	2	10	6	17				

Only in your dreams

AFP, Berlin

Germany manager Jurgen Klinsmann may have set himself the lofty target of winning the 2006 World Cup but the German Football Federation (DFB) believes just reaching the quarterfinals would be a success.

"I know success at the World Cup is important for him (Klinsmann) but his expectation level is higher than mine," DFB co-president, Theo Zwanziger told Bild am Sonntag.

"As far as I am concerned, reaching the quarter-finals would be a success -- if the team played with enthusiasm and went out to a strong opponent. Let's be honest we do not have a team like that of 1974 or 1990."

West Germany tasted World Cup success in 1974 and 1990 but Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, outgoing DFB president, believes the 2006 World Cup on home soil has come too soon for Germany's youngsters.

"Perhaps it would be better if the World Cup was in two years," Mayer-Vorfelder said to the Stuttgarter Zeitung.

The 2005 Confederations Cup, where Germany reached the semi-finals, raised hopes ahead of the World Cup but friendly defeats to Slovakia (2-0) and Turkey (2-1) have dampened that optimism.

A recent poll in Stern magazine revealed that out of the 1000 Germans asked just three percent felt World Cup glory was a possibility.

Germany crashed out of Euro 2004 without a single win but it is worth remembering that they headed into the 2002 World Cup as outsiders after a poor Euro 2000 finals and went on to reach the final losing 2-0 to Brazil.

Pakistan hopes to improve image

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's cricket chief on Monday said he hoped the forthcoming series with England would improve his country's image -- both off and on the field.

"I think the series against England is important for our safe image because England is the first side other than the sub-continental (South Asian) sides to play in Pakistan for five years," Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Shaharyar Khan told AFP.

England was the last non-South Asian side to play in the troubled cities of Karachi and Peshawar in 2000 before the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States sparked security fears in and around Pakistan.

The so-called "9-11" attacks killed about 3,000 people and were claimed by al-Qaeda.

Hundreds of insurgents with suspected links to al-Qaeda sneaked into Pakistan across the porous border from Afghanistan after US-led forces helped oust the headline Taliban regime there in late 2001.

But Pakistan says it has so far rounded up about 700 al-Qaeda suspects, including alleged top operatives, both in army searches of lawless tribal border areas and other operations in major cities.

"Tension was at the peak after 9-11 because no team was ready to tour Pakistan," said Khan, a former foreign office secretary and High Commissioner (ambassador) to India and the United Kingdom.

Australia and the West Indies refused to tour Pakistan, citing players' safety concerns and the series were played on neutral venues in 2002.

New Zealand, who postponed their tour of Pakistan a week after the 9-11 incidents, had to cut short their revised series after a bomb blast outside their team hotel in Karachi killed 14 people in May 2002.

That followed South Africa and India's refusal to play a five-day Test in Karachi where bomb blasts and ethnic violence has killed scores of people in the last five years.

England, too, refused to play a Test in Karachi over security fears and agreed to play only one limited-overs international in the southern port city on the current tour.

SA keep

FROM PAGE 12

Boucher not out 22
Kemp not out 1
Extras: (lb-3, w-7, nb-1) 11
Total: (For 5 wks in 28.1 overs) 140
Fall of wickets: 1-61, 2-103, 3-106, 4-113, 5-131
Did not bat: Hall, Langeveldt, Ntini, Pollock

Bowler
O M R W
Mills 8 0 45 1
Bond 5 0 27 0
Franklin 4 1 19 1
Styris 6 0 27 1
Vettori 5 0 18 2
Astle 0.1 0 1 0

Result: South Africa won by 5 wickets (D/L Method) and clinch the 5-ODI series 4-0.
Man-of-the-match: Andrew Hall.
Man-of-the-series: Justin Kemp.

Ferguson shows who's boss



Football

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson hit back at the club's critics with an angry tirade after seeing Darren Fletcher's first-half header seal a 1-0 win that ended Chelsea's 40-game unbeaten run in the Premiership.

Ferguson had endured talk of a club in crisis and rumours about the security of his job following humiliating away defeats at Middlesbrough and Lille and club captain Roy Keane's scathing criticism of his team-mates on the club's own television channel.

However, Ferguson -- who celebrated his nineteenth anniversary as United manager with the visit of the champions -- responded in fiery fashion by dismissing out of hand the suggestions that he had been under pressure prior to this hard-fought victory.

"The talk about pressure was absolute bollocks. Did you know that we actually went 13 games without winning once? People forget these things."

"I don't care about it at all and winning is all that's important here and how you handle the criticism. The players have got on with the job. Everybody goes through bad spells

and when you have bad spells, you fall points behind the leaders.

"For an hour against Chelsea we were terrific, but we were under the cosh for the last ten minutes because they went for everything, but that's what champions do."



SIR ALEX FERGUSON

"My young players have to get consistency, but the bones of my team are sitting in the stand at the moment and are no use to us, so the young players have been carrying the mantle for weeks now, but they showed cool heads and lot of composure."

"It is not easy to perform in that situation. These lads have not cried off and they have not deserted their posts

when all the experienced lads were unfit.

"They have wanted to play every game and they have carried us through this bad spell. They will be terrific players for the future of this club."

United midfielder Alan Smith claimed that Keane's televised criticisms had helped fuel the home side's desire to claim victory against Mourinho's team.

"That kind of performance has always been there, but sometimes you need a reminder that you are performing at a big club and that you are no longer at your previous club."

"Manchester United should not be getting beaten like we did at Middlesbrough last week."

"I think everyone knows where the reminder has come from and we accept criticism when it comes. Roy is a proud person and he told us exactly what he said, but we went out there today and put on a performance."

Like Fletcher, Smith was on the end of a personalised Keane tongue-lashing, although, having had chance to sit down and watch the interview with his captain and the rest of United's squad, the former Leeds man has a different take on the interview. "The stuff which has been reported is rubbish really," he told Sky Sports.

He's human after all



Football

REUTERS, London

Jose Mourinho is in the unaccustomed position of having to put on a brave face after a fortnight of reverses culminated in Chelsea's first league defeat in 41 games.

The super-confident Portu-guese boss pronounced himself "not afraid of the future" following Manchester United's 1-0 victory at Old Trafford which came hard on the heels of Chelsea's Champions League defeat at Real Betis.

Mourinho and his Roman Abramovich-bankrolled squad of top international talent are treading on unfamiliar ground, however.

Chelsea had notched nine victories in a row from the start of the season before bottom club Everton held them to a 1-1 draw at Goodison Park on Oct. 23.

There followed an ignominious penalties exit at home to Charlton from the League Cup, a trophy they won last season.

Three days later, their much vaunted defence, backed by Petr Cech between the posts and which broke records for its impregnable last season, conceded two goals for the first time since December last year against Arsenal.

They went on to beat Blackburn Rovers 4-2 but, on Nov. 1, went down 1-0 in Seville to a Spanish side they had trounced 4-0 only two weeks before.

A fortnight ago many thought Chelsea's progression to the knockout stages of the Champions League a formality. Today they find themselves in a three-horse race in their group with Liverpool and Betis and needing points from their last two games.

It is only the second time since Mourinho arrived at Chelsea after winning the Champions League with Porto, that they have lost two games on the trot. The last time was in February when they stumbled 1-0 in the FA Cup at

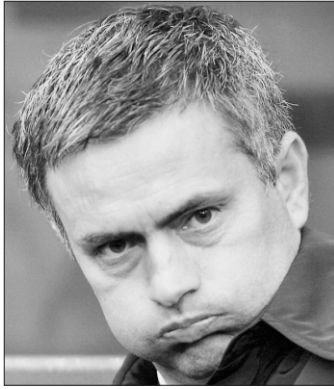
Newcastle before losing the first leg of a Champions League tie that they went on to win against Barcelona.

Their previous league defeat dates back to Oct. 16 2004, at Manchester City and Chelsea went on to win the championship by a margin of 12 points last season.

Mourinho, the self-styled "special one", has suffered two defeats in a row on four occasions in his five-year managerial career, the other two were with Uniao Leiria in 2001 and Porto in 2002.

He has never lost twice in succession in the league.

The rest of the Premier League may



JOSE MOURINHO

have sighed collectively with relief at Chelsea, and Mourinho's, recent fallibility.

There have even been mutterings in the British press of unrest in the London side's tight ranks with reports of tension between Mourinho and injury prone winger Arjen Robben as well as unsettled Argentine striker Hernan Crespo.

Mourinho will doubtless use all his famous psychology and motivational skills over the next few games, though his attempts to reinforce an esprit de corps will be delayed this week by international fixtures with most of his multi-national squad dispersed. He has started already, talking up his side's performance immediately after the game at Old Trafford, saying he was

proud of his players who would stay calm and confident.

"This was a game we did not deserve to lose," he said.

"I hope they (United) can realise why Chelsea are champions, top of the league and I believe will be champions again."

A six-point cushion over surprise second-placed Wigan could be reduced to three if the promoted side win their game in hand. United in third are still 10 points adrift and Arsenal lie a point behind, both with an extra game to play.

While few would bet against Chelsea winning the title again the Londoners' blip will give their rivals heart.

It is Mourinho's job to quash such hopes and he insisted others would eagerly swap places with Chelsea given the chance.

"We are not under pressure now," he said.

Arsenal collapsed in the Premiership last season after losing the 49-game unbeaten record at Old Trafford, but Mourinho insisted that his team would avoid a similar fate.

"I don't see us doing what Arsenal did after losing here last season, simply because of the way my players performed."

"When we lost at Betis last week, I didn't want to look at my players, but after this I am really proud of them. They have lost in a very difficult stadium, against big players and against a team that was desperate for a result, so I am not afraid or worried about the future."

Inzy afraid

FROM PAGE 12

He also ruled out the possibility of spinners dominating the Tests to increase the chances of keeping up with over rates.

"It is a misconception that we are going to have totally spinning tracks for the Tests. I have not seen the pitch for the first Test but we have asked for well-balanced cricket pitches," he added.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	37 Prop at a	DOWN	21 Uncle
1 "Sultan of Swat"	Gallagher concert	1 Grate	Sam's home
5 Snake	40 Camel feature	2 PC operator	23 Bring forth
8 Jet forth	41 Law-rence's territory	3 Mah-jongg piece	24 Incite
12 One side of the Urals	45 Harbor structure	4 Fool	25 Cold War
13 Ashen	47 Under-standing	5 Between news agency	26 Comes-tibles
14 Moolah	49 Play advice	6 Existed	27 Moth variety
15 Broker's	50 Bullets	7 Eastern-most of a noted	28 Cursed
16 Follower (suffix)	51 Annoy	8 Seek	29 Yokel
17 Bohemian	52 Sword handle	9 Forgave	30 Verve
18 Word beginning	53 Resorts	10 "Guinness Book"	31 Branch
20 Bygone, to Burns	54 Aye undoer	11 "Explain yourself!"	32 Support-ing
22 Itsy-bitsy spider's place	55 "Born Free" heroine	12 Cartesian conclusion	33 Modern money
26 Assertion		13 "Monop-oly"	34 Afflic-tions
29 Through			35 Sask. neighbor
30 Gun-lobby org.			36 45 -- de-deux
31 Quest			37 Mischief-maker
32 Hallow-een shout			38 Mound stat
33 Cribbage scorers			
34 -- budget			
35 Diving bird			
36 Loses color			

Solution time: 25 mins.

