

**SUPER-SUBS MAY GO
ICC thinking of Twenty20 event**

REUTERS, Dubai

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced plans on Wednesday to stage a Twenty20 world championship in September 2007.

World cricket's governing body also said it wanted to scrap the controversial super-sub rule in one-day internationals.

The two recommendations are subject to approval by the ICC executive board at a meeting in Dubai next month.

"We have already received bids from six to seven countries who are willing to play host to the (Twenty20) event," ICC chief executive Malcolm Speed told reporters after a meeting of chief executives in Dubai.

There has been an explosion of interest in professional Twenty20 cricket since it was launched in England in 2003.

In its first season, the short-game format attracted an overall attendance of 250,000 to the evening games between county sides. It was also formally included in the Australian interstate competition this season.

Speed said the ICC planned to scrap the on-trial super-sub rule next month.

"We have recommended to the board that the on-trial super-sub rule may be discontinued from March 21, 2006, since it has proved to be unpopular with the teams and hasn't achieved the objective," he said.

"We introduced this rule on a 12-month trial basis last year to make one-day cricket more exciting. But from the feedback that we have received from captains and former players it was apparent that we should not continue with it."

The original intention of the super-sub rule was to encourage teams to make greater use of all-rounders.

In practice, the ICC said, teams have used specialists as substitutes and this has placed undue importance on winning the toss.

Over appealing lands Asif fine

REUTERS, Mumbai

Pakistani pace bowler Mohammad Asif has been fined 10 per cent of his match fee for excessive appealing during Monday's third one-day international against India in Lahore.

Asif, who took two wickets in one over during the match, pleaded guilty at an international Cricket Council (ICC) hearing, the ICC said on Wednesday.

All Level 1 breaches of the ICC code of conduct carry a minimum penalty of an official reprimand and a maximum of 50 per cent of a player's match fee. Asif cannot appeal the decision.

U-19s win

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were reduced to 48-4, but a 77-run fifth wicket stand between Shamsur Rahman and Mehrab Hossain Jr steered them home, reaching 162 for 6 in 33.1 overs.

For the match Shamsur Rahman hit a 50-ball 44 that featured nine boundaries while Mehrab contributed 35 off 71 balls with six hits to the fence. Skipper Mushtaq was not out with a 25-ball 18.

Pascal was the most successful West Indies bowler claiming four wickets for 53 runs.

Meanwhile, India buried England, who shattered Bangladesh's semifinal hopes, under a pile of runs to reach the final of the competition.

India rode on an unbeaten 129 from Cheteshwar Pujara to amass 292-4 in the first Super League semifinal and then shot England out for 58 to score a thumping 234-run victory.

SCORES IN BRIEF

WEST INDIES: 161 all out in 37.2 overs (Roach 29 not out, Pascal 29, Sing 24, Fletcher 18, Johnson 14; Nabil 3-24, Danner 3-46, Sakib 2-32, Rezaul 1-0, Mehrab 1-8)

BANGLADESH: 162 for 6 in 33.1 overs (Shamsur 44, Mehrab 35, Mushtaq 18 not out, Sakib 15, Khadem 14, extras 23; Pascal 4-53, Brooks 1-27 and Roach 1-32)

Result: Bangladesh Under-19 won by four wickets.



Did U Know?

The very first Wimbledon Championship was held in 1877 and watched by some 200 spectators.

PREMIERSHIP

Garcia sinks Gunners

Football

AFP, Liverpool

Luis Garcia scored an 87th-minute winner as Liverpool beat Arsenal 1-0 in the Premiership to close the gap on second-placed Manchester United to three points.

It was a win Liverpool fully deserved on the balance of play, but it would be a hard man who did not sympathise for Jens Lehmann, who saved a Steven Gerrard penalty and made a string of fine saves that seemed to have earned the Gunners an unlikely point.

The goal was the product of two substitutes. Dietmar Hamann's fierce drive was saved superbly by his fellow German, but this time, luck was against him, and Garcia reacted sharpest to force the rebound over the line, consigning Arsenal to their ninth defeat of the season.

Lehmann had insisted before the game that even in their weakened state they had the quality to beat the European champions, but that was never apparent, and for much of the game, the German keeper was all that stood between Liverpool and a comfortable victory.

His best save came after 21 minutes. A quickly taken freekick from Xabi Alonso had found Gerrard wide on the right and when he slung in a cross, Philippe Senderos, under minimal pressure from Robbie Fowler, misread the bounce, allowing the ball to loop backwards of his head.

Lehmann, diving backwards, somehow clawed it away for a corner.

Liverpool were utterly on top at that point, Gerrard and Alonso both caressing 50-yard balls to feet seemingly at will, and their only concern would have been how few clear chances their domination had created.

Their forwards are without a Premiership goal in 2006 and it is nothard to see why. John Arne Riise had sent a 25-yard drive scooting just wide, but their only other real chance of the first half was gifted to them by referee Graham Poll.

Harry Kewell seemed to have overhauled his flick for Fernando Morientes after 31 minutes, but Poll saw illegality in the way Emmanuel Eboue shepherded the

Spaniard away from the ball and awarded a penalty.

Arsenal were furious, but Lehmann again came to their rescue, diving low to his right to parry Gerrard's kick.

Eboue and Kolo Toure were both given an instant recall to Arsenal's back four after their return from African Nations duty with Ivory Coast. Toure, in particular, had a fine tournament in Egypt, and he carried that form into Tuesday night.

He was within a couple of feet of giving Arsenal an 11th-minute lead as he met Cesc Fabregas's right-wing freekick with a firm downward header, and then made a critical impact at the other end of the pitch, nicking Kewell's cross away from Morientes as a goal seemed a formality.

Morientes's lack of goals remains a concern -- he has scored just three in the Premiership so far.

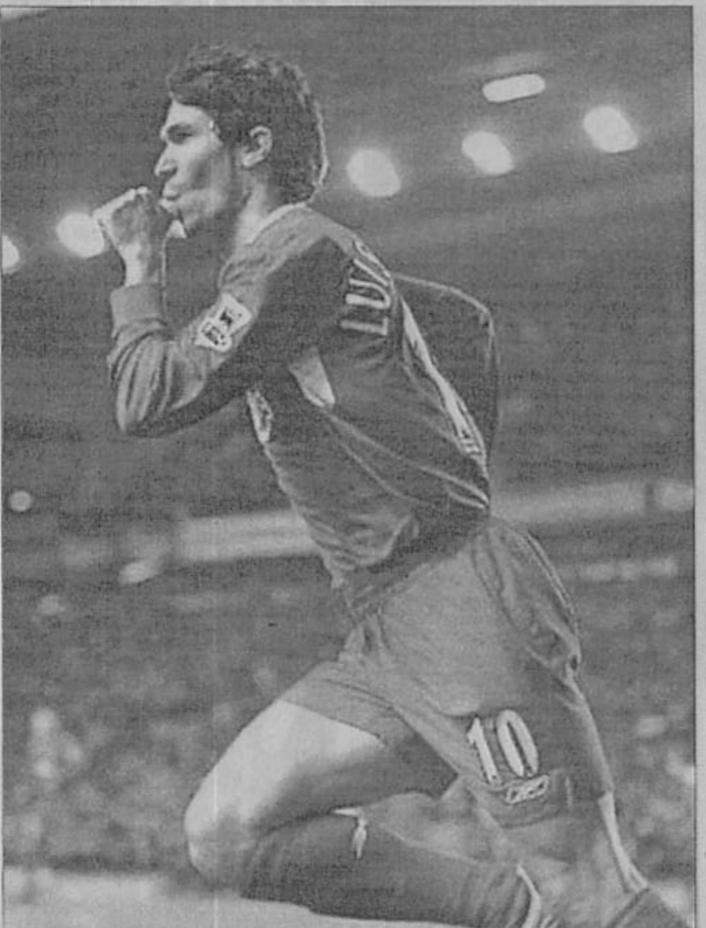
Liverpool this season -- and he spurned another good chance seven minutes before half-time, heading tamely at Lehmann after being picked out by Fowler.

Meeting a Gerrard cross after 62 minutes he made far better contact, only for his header to drift a fraction wide.

Fowler himself was tidy enough, and, five minutes after half-time, very nearly registered his first goal since his return to the club from Manchester City last month.

After cushioning Gerrard's cross and sweeping by Senderos, his low shot brilliantly saved by Lehmann sprawling to his right.

As the pressure continued, Fredrik Ljungberg cleared off the line from Hyppia and Lehmann pushed away a spectacular overhead from Kewell, but in the end logic could only be denied for so long.



'Three Ronaldos will shine at WC'

AFP, Lisbon

Portugal star Luis Figo predicts the three Ronaldos -- Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo, Real Madrid's Ronaldo and Barcelona's Ronaldinho -- will shine at the World Cup in Germany later this year.

"I believe Cristiano Ronaldo will shine because he is very good," Portuguese sports daily Record quoted the Inter Milan as saying on Wednesday.

"Ronaldo too because he always shines during big tournaments and Ronaldinho also because he is enjoying a very good phase of his career," he added.

Barcelona's 25-year-old Brazilian midfielder won his second straight FIFA World Player of the Year award in December.

Born Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, he was dubbed Ronaldinho -- which is Portuguese for "little Ronaldo" -- as a way to distinguish himself from fellow Brazilian footballer Ronaldo of Real Madrid.

Brazil lead FIFA's world rankings and is favoured to win its record sixth World Cup title.



PHOTO: AFP
STILL NOT ENOUGH: Real Madrid star David Beckham and Cicinho look far from being happy even after they won 4-0 at Zaragoza in their Spanish Cup second leg semifinal at the Bernabeu on Tuesday.

SPANISH KING'S CUP

Real go down fighting

Football

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid were unable to complete an epic comeback victory over Real Zaragoza despite a storming 4-0 win at the Bernabeu in the return leg of their King's Cup semi-final on Tuesday.

And those reports came just eight days before the first leg of the 16-Champions League showdown in London.

Eto'o

believed the reports, which suggested Thierry Henry would replace him at the Nou Camp, were specifically intended to unsettle him ahead of the big clash.

He told Spanish daily El Mundo Deportivo: "What happened? Have there been any offers to me, no? I think if we were playing Juventus they would say Fabio Capello wanted me."

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