

# England crushed in tour opener

Cricket

AFP, Canberra

Shaun Tait stormed into first Test calculations with a withering fast bowling performance as England succumbed to a 166-run defeat in their opening Australian Ashes tour match here Friday.

The tourists' bowlers were hammered for a record 347 for five by a Prime Minister's XI off 50 overs and in reply England were skittled for just 181 off 38.4 overs.

It was a worrying performance with the first of the five Ashes Tests, in Brisbane, just 13 days away.

Tait, little used in his two Tests in last year's Ashes series, threw down his challenge for the third fast-bowling slot behind Glenn McGrath and Brett Lee at the Gabba with explosive figures of 3-21 from eight overs.

The South Australian slinger worked up a full head of steam and claimed the prized wicket of England skipper Andrew Flintoff for one off three balls, while big-hitting Kevin Pietersen fell for seven.

The day began poorly for England, with opener Phil Jaques leading the charge with 112 off 110 balls after the PM's XI was sent into bat by Flintoff.

It was the highest score by a PM's XI team against a touring side in the national capital, surpassing the 334 for 5 against India in 1999 and one totally beyond England Friday.

Only vice-captain and Middlesex opener Andrew Strauss looked the part with some sweetly timed shots before he went for 67.

Opener Marcus Trescothick faced just three balls before he edged Tait to second slip for two and Alastair Cook miss-timed a pull shot to top-edge Ben Hilfenhaus to wicketkeeper Tim Paine for four.

Paul Collingwood looked set before he found Jaques at deep mid-wicket off leg-spinner Cameron White for 35, putting on

58 for the third wicket with Strauss.

Strauss reached his half-century off 50 balls, showing exquisite timing but was annoyed with himself when he tried to hook Tait, only to offer a simple catch to Hilfenhaus at mid-on.

His runs came off as many balls and his innings included 12 fours to all parts of the ground.

Pietersen perished to an ill-judged hook shot, top-edging Hilfenhaus to Paine for seven before Tait bowled Flintoff two balls later.

Flintoff was beaten by Tait's sheer pace to have his stumps spreadeagled and next ball Ashley Giles survived a huge shout for lbw with Tait down on his knees beseeching the umpire.

Giles was run out by White for 13, Sajid Mahmood was stumped down the leg-side off White for 22, Anderson was lbw to local player Adam Ritchard for a duck and Monty Panesar was last man out for one with wicketkeeper Geraint Jones not out 13.

Earlier, Test opener-in-waiting

Phil Jaques gave Australian selectors more food for thought with an impressive century.

Jaques, who has the obstacle of long-time incumbents Justin Langer and Matthew Hayden blocking his way into the Australian Test team, hit nine boundaries and two sixes in his breezy knock off 110 balls.

He gave only one chance, on 21, when he was put down by wicketkeeper Geraint Jones off James Anderson, before he holed out in the deep to Cook off medium-pace Collingwood in the 37th over.

The runs flowed late in the innings, with 112 runs coming off the last 10 overs.

Shaun Marsh hit an unbeaten 78 off 56 balls, Travis Birt smacked 40 off 45 balls and Adam Voges chipped in with 39 off 32 balls.

The PM's XI batsmen smashed a total of eight sixes in the innings, with skipper Cameron White helping himself to three of them in an unbeaten 30 off 14 balls.

Flintoff, looking for a solid bowling stint to fully test his ankle, was the pick of England's wayward bowlers with 1-55 off 10 overs after conceding just 10 runs in his first five overs.

Lancashire fast bowler Anderson looked ineffective, going for 1-65 off 10 overs while seamer Sajid Mahmood had major problems with overstepping.

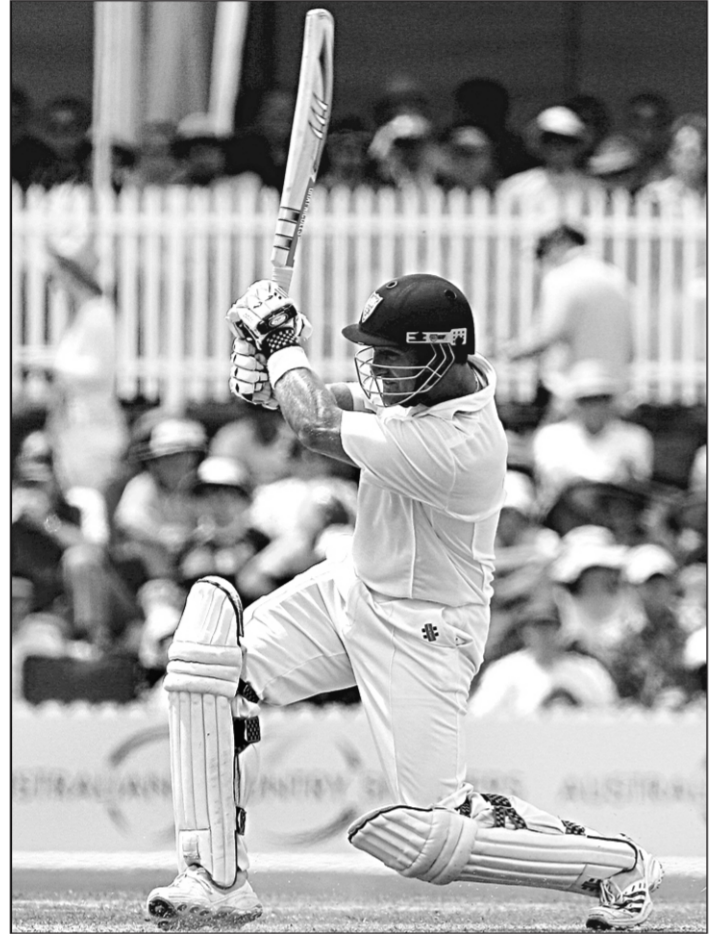
He finished with a tally of six no balls and four wides in his sorry return of 1-97 off nine overs.

Panesar only bowled three overs, for 17, and fellow spinner Giles 1-53 off eight overs.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
**PRIME MINISTER'S XI:** 347 for 5 in 50 overs (Jaques 112, Cosgrove 24, Birt 40, Marsh 78 not out, Voges 39)

**ENGLAND:** 181 all out in 38.4 overs (Strauss 67, Collingwood 35 Mahmood 22, extras 16; Tait 3-21, Hilfenhaus 2-49, Ritchard 2-24, White 2-32)

**Result: Prime Minister's XI won by 166 runs.**



Australia Prime Minister XI batsman Phil Jaques drives the ball during his century in their tour match against England in Canberra on Friday.

## Forgotten men

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out and chase the game Real were able to pick them off at will.

After 68 minutes Ronaldo swivelled and fired into the corner for his first goal since scoring in a 1-1 draw against Real Sociedad on April 8, and in the 72nd Reyes was pulled back in the area for a penalty.

Van Nistelrooy made no mistake from the spot but five minutes later Ecija's travelling fans were rewarded with a goal as Mario flicked a header inside Real's far post.

Almost immediately it was 4-1 as Van Nistelrooy scored with an overhead kick from close range, and substitute De la Red finished off with a fine long range effort at the end.

## Croats, English

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conduct during the Under-21 second leg play-off match on October 10, between Germany and England.

Werder Bremen striker Hunt, whose mother is English, was said to have been one of the German players that allegedly directed monkey taunts at England pair Micah Richards and Anton Ferdinand, but protested his innocence.

"We take the issue of racism very seriously and we welcome the fact that UEFA have decided to take action on this case," Bevington added.

## Fergie livid

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our game with Chelsea but I'm now fearing he gets the game with all the controversy with Chelsea and now that Keith Hackett is meeting with Jose Mourinho.

"Jesus goodness me, what's going on in this world? Does he ever go and meet Arsene Wenger or Rafa Benitez or this old guy here? Has a preference gone out to Chelsea because they have had a bad decision against them?"

"It's absolutely ludicrous." Chelsea full-back Ashley Cole claimed Poll told him during the Spurs game that Chelsea 'need to be taught a lesson' because of their indiscipline.

But Ferguson ridiculed suggestions the referee was biased against the London club citing Poll's failure to dismiss Claude Makelele during a recent clash with Aston Villa.

"He should have sent Makelele off in the Aston Villa game but he didn't," Ferguson added.

"So if he had they would have lost Makelele for three games and that would have made a difference. Sometimes you get the decisions and sometimes you don't. And when you are not getting them you think he is against you and when you are getting them you say well he's alright today. We're all coloured by that."

# Freddy steady despite thrashing

Cricket

AFP, Canberra

Captain Andrew Flintoff said a heavy 166-run loss in Friday's opening Australian tour match does not suddenly turn England into bad cricket side.

Flintoff, who scored only one as his team was comprehensively drubbed by the Prime Minister's XI in a one-day game here, said the tourists were far from despondent and would learn from their first experience of Australian conditions.

Opening batsman Phil Jaques smashed 112 in the PM XI's 347 for five and Ashes Test bowling aspirant Shaun Tait claimed three English wickets for 21 with some hostile short-pitched bowling to skittle Flintoff's team for 181 in just 38.4 overs.

England were a beaten team a long time before Monty Panesar's final wicket fell, but Flintoff put on a brave face with less than a fortnight to the opening Ashes Test at Brisbane's Gabba ground.

"We were outplayed by the Prime Minister's XI, they played some good cricket," Flintoff said.

"On previous tours we have started slow and we've been beaten in warm-up games and we've bounced back quick."

"Today was a one-day game and we're not going to get too

despondent about it. Next week we have the (three-day) NSW (New South Wales) game, a longer form, and then we have the South Australia game so we're not despondent about it.

"We know we have to improve and we'll do that next week before the first Test in Brisbane.

"We had a defeat today. It doesn't turn us into a bad side. We've still got talented players and we're going to express ourselves in the weeks to come."

Three of England's top batsmen -- Andrew Strauss (67), Alastair Cook (4) and Kevin Pietersen (7) were all victims of short-pitched balls, with Tait in dynamic form to push his Test claims.

"The lads are aware of what happened today," Flintoff said.

"Sometimes in one-day cricket you are looking to score runs and you are looking to take the ball on a little bit more and sometimes you play shots you probably wouldn't necessarily do in the longer form of the game.

"I'm sure the lads would have learned from today, going into the three-day games next week.

"In the dressing room the confidence is fine, the lads are still upbeat and we just have to work hard."

On a personal front, Flintoff was delighted to have bowled out his 10 overs to fully test his fitness from mid-year ankle surgery.

"I was pleased. I got 10 overs under my belt, I started well in three spells, came back strong and the body felt good and my ankle pulled up nicely. So from my personal point I was pleased with my 10 overs," he said.

PM's XI captain Cameron White was satisfied with a job well done to help uncover some weaknesses in the England side for the Australian Test team to exploit.

"I'm not sure how the defeat will affect them, but I think it might put them under a bit more pressure to perform in their tour games coming up," White said.

"We talked about trying to put them on the back foot, so it that helped the Australian team out some way then we would have done our stuff."

Tait, who played down talk of his Test chances, said based on the evidence of the PM's XI game, Australia had some cause for optimism about the upcoming Ashes series.

"There are some (English) guys who don't really play the short ball that well and they are prepared to have a go at it, so we exploited that today and we got three wickets off short balls," Tait said.

"The Australian team could look at that and maybe exploit that as well."

England take on NSW in a three-day game starting at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Sunday.

## Biman back on top

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Biman consolidated their position in the Dutch-Bangla Bank First Division Chess League when they regained the lead in the table yesterday.

Biman were level with Chittagong Mohammedan Sporting Club atop the table on 21.5 points but they have played six games compared to the Chittagong outfit's seven.

Leonine Chess Club were just one point behind the joint leaders while Destiny 2000 were third with 20 points after end of the seventh round at the Chess Federation hall-room yesterday.

In the sixth round, Biman routed Faith Chess Club 4-0 while Mohammadan won against Toyota Motors Chess Club by an identical margin. Leonine dropped one point in a 3-1 win over Friends Chess Power, Destiny beat Dhaka University Chess Team also 3-1 and Muktiyoddah Sangsad beat Narayangaj City Chess Club by 2.5-1.5.

In the seventh round, Biman beat Narayangaj Chess Club 3.5-0.5, Mohammadan beat Muktiyoddah 4-0, Leonine beat Farashganj 4-0, Destiny beat Titas 4-0, Prodig Sangha beat Toyota 4-0, Sonali Bank beat Friends 4-0 and Dhaka University beat Faith 3-1.

## Zee, ESPN-Star to bid for ICC TV rights

REUTERS, Mumbai

Zee Telefilms Ltd. and ESPN-Star Sports will bid for the global telecast rights of the International Cricket Council's matches from 2007-15, officials from the two firms confirmed Friday.

Dubai-based Taj Television's Ten Sports and India's Nimbus Communications may also submit a bid for the cricket rights in Dubai on Friday, industry officials said.

## Bans boost

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The second Test will be played at Multan (November 19-23) and the third in Karachi (November 27-December 1).

## SQUADS

**West Indies (from):** Brian Lara (capt), Ramnaresh Sarwan, Chris Gayle, Daren Ganga, Lendl Simmons, Shivnarine Chandepaul, Runako Morton, Dwayne Bravo, Denesh Ramdin, Corey Collymore, Fidel Edwards, Daren Powell, Jerome Taylor, Omari Banks, Dave Mohammed

**Pakistan (from):** Inzamamul Haq, Mohammad Hafeez, Imran Farhat, Yasir Hameed, Younis Khan, Mohammad Yousuf, Shoaib Malik, Abdul Razzaq, Faisal Iqbal, Kamran Akmal, Umar Gul, Samiullah Niazi, Shahid Nazir, Abdul Rehman, Danish Kaneria.

## Henin moves

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Mauresmo came here having to shrug off a shoulder injury and in her first match was swatted easily by Petrova.

And when Hingis moved ahead it looked as if Mauresmo might throw in the towel.

That not being in the nature of the Australian Open and Wimbledon champ, she roared back to level the tie and then, from 3-1 in the second she motored to seven straight games to finish the resistance of the Swiss miss, winning after 75 minutes on her fourth match point.

## Batsmen keep

FROM PAGE 17  
second innings- 63-1 in 26 overs (Javed 18 batting, Mehrab 28, Anwar 8 batting, extras 9; Rajan 1-6); BARISAL: First innings- 154 all out in 69 overs (Imran 8, Hannan 32, Faruq 10, Mehdi 0, Rajan 1, Humayun 8, Shaheen 9, Sonnet 46 not out, Salahuddin 7, Hasan 14, Sajedul 0, extras 19; Shahadat 3-43, Sharif 4-50, Rafique 2-28, Shakil 1-17).

**CHITTAGONG:** First innings- 268 all out in 89.4 overs (Tamim 11, Salahuddin 48, Nazim 38, Aftab 44, Ehsanul 21, Faisal 4, Dhiman 26, Sabbir 0, Sunny 8, Tarek 16, Ashiqur 10, extras 42; Tapash 3-41, Nazmul 1-19, Rezaul 3-46, Enamul 2-66, Alok 1-37).

## Mertesacker

FROM PAGE 20  
time," Loew said. Strikers Aaron Hunt of Bremen, Mario Gomez of VfB Stuttgart and Bayer Leverkusen's Stefan Kiessling had been mentioned recently as possible candidates. He said they would get their chances next year.

Loew once again picked Jan Schlaudraff of Alemannia Aachen as his fourth striker after he had been nominated for two matches in October.

Loew said VfL Wolfsburg striker Mike Hanke would probably replace Podolski alongside Bremen's Miroslav Klose in the first team.

# Ponting apology buries Pawar crisis

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Indian cricket supremo Sharad Pawar has accepted an apology from Australian captain Ricky Ponting for his team's behaviour after the Champions Trophy final, an official said on Friday.

"Ponting spoke to Mr Pawar and apologised for the incident. Mr Pawar has accepted the apology and told him the matter was closed," said Board of Control for Cricket in India official Rajiv Shukla.

"It's over. Let's get on with the cricket."

Cricket Australia had said earlier that Ponting contacted Pawar late Thursday after 36 hours of trying and expressed regret for offence caused when the Australian man-

handled the official off the presentation stage after Sunday's final.

"It was a very amicable telephone call and the two of them decided they would take a sporting approach and move on," CA spokesman Peter Young said in Sydney.

"Ricky offered an apology on behalf of himself and the team and it was accepted in good spirit."

Television footage after Australia's win showed an impatient Ponting gesturing with his finger for Pawar to hand over the trophy quickly and batsman Damien Martyn then pushing him away from the celebrating players.

The images generated outrage in India, where cricketing greats Sunil Gavaskar and Sachin Tendulkar condemned the Australians.

BCCI president Pawar, a political

heavyweight and federal agriculture minister, expressed a desire to play down the incident but on Thursday described his treatment as "totally uncivilised" to an Australian newspaper.

The furore had threatened to overshadow Australia's preparations for the upcoming Ashes series against England and jeopardise relations with the powerful BCCI.

"Cricket Australia felt it was really important to clear the air on this matter," Young said.

"Ricky wanted to take ownership of the situation on behalf of himself and his team."

Australia are due to tour India next October for seven one-day internationals.

India go to Australia in December 2007 for four Tests and a tri-series also featuring Sri Lanka.

# Shoaib pledges innocence

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Shoaib Akhtar has once again pleaded innocence in the doping scandal, saying one or a combination of the nutrition supplements he has been taking could have caused the Nandrolone levels to go up.

He also argued that the supplements were not banned, hence his ban be overturned.

Shoaib was banned for two years from all cricket on November 1 by a Pakistan Cricket Board tribunal after testing positive in an internal doping test conducted by the Pakistan team just before the Champions Trophy.

"I maintain I have done nothing wrong," Shoaib told AFP.

"Don't stop me from playing cricket; my whole career is at stake." He said he had told the tribunal that they should ban the supplements, which are available in the market before they ban him.

Shoaib has lodged an appeal,

which will be heard by a committee comprising of former judge Justice Fakhruddin Ibrahim, former Test player Haseeb Ahsan, and doping expert Dr Danish Zaheer.

"The nutritional supplements like Promax-50 and Nitron-5 are not banned even in World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) list and I don't know if they have produced Nandrolone in my body," Shoaib said.

He said the doping expert Dr Abbas Rizvi had told the tribunal as much.

Shoaib had undergone twin knee operations in February this year and had missed Pakistan's tour of Sri Lanka and Test series in England due to recurrence of an ankle injury.

"They should have considered my medical condition; I have gone through dozens of operations and have taken hundreds of medicines to heal up injuries.

I am not a doctor and don't know much about medicines."



Winners of the Jatiya Press Club mini marathon pose for photograph after the prize distribution ceremony at the JPC VIP Lounge yesterday.

# Barca, Sevilla neck and neck

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netted twice. Coach Frank Rijkaard said in midweek that "I told the players I am happy with their attitude" despite some results going astray.

Of being second he noted the top sides are bunched together and added that "Sevilla are a serious title candidate" whom the pressure is now on given their newly-elevated vantage point.

Sevilla coach Juande Ramos is not getting carried away although the performances in recent weeks of the likes of Malian international Frederic Kanoute have sent a ripple through La Liga.

"It's a nice position to be in for the fans and the club. But as professionals we know there is an awful long way to go yet. We have to keep on plugging away to make sure we stay up there," he told reporters.

Real Madrid, fourth and with four points to make up on Sevilla after last week's home reverse - their first under Fabio Capello - to Celta Vigo,

travel up to Osasuna, in the bottom five after last season's eye-catching fourth-place finish.

Capello insisted that Real had played well against Vigo but wants things to click much better in attack and used Thursday's Spanish Cup match with minnows Ecija to give Ruud Van Nistelrooy and Ronaldo a chance to see how their partnership can develop.

But Capello clearly also wants to plug some holes at the back and Marca sports daily on Thursday said Real had beaten Sevilla to the signature of Brazilian Marcelo of Fluminense for seven million euros.

Elsewhere, Valencia, fifth but level on points with Real and like them through to the Champions League last 16, host Athletic Bilbao on Saturday.

Bilbao, never relegated, flirted with the drop for much of last season and things have not improved this campaign with only one win to date leaving them in the bottom four.

Valencia striker David Villa, a Spanish international, will play despite being sin-binned by coach Quique Sanchez Flores on Thursday for booting a ball out of play and then throwing his training bib to the ground after Flores told him to go after it.

"These things happen," said Flores.

## FIXTURES

**Saturday**  
(all times in GMT)  
Atletico Madrid v Villarreal (19:00), Valencia v Athletic Bilbao (21:00)  
**Sunday**  
(16:00 unless stated)  
Real Sociedad v Espanyol, Betis v Levante, Getafe v Real Mallorca, Gimnastic v Deportivo La Coruna, Celta v Recreativo, Racing v Sevilla Osasuna v Real Madrid (18:00), Barcelona v Zaragoza (20:00)

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