

C'WEALTH CHESS

14th place for Zia

SPORTS REPORTER

British Grandmaster Nigel Short emerged unbeaten champion in the securing nine points in the Commonwealth Chess Championship which concluded in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Bangladeshi GM Ziaur Rahman finished 14th with seven points while his fellow GM Niaz Murshed clinched 35th place with six points.

In the final and tenth round, Zia beat Indian Woman Grandmaster Karavade Eesha while Niaz drew with Sethuaman of India.

Gibbs takes

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plumb lbw playing across the line and then caught Justin Kemp first ball when the powerful right-hander chopped Sachin Tendulkar straight to him at point.

At 155-6 the Indians sensed an opening, but just as Kallis and Kemp had done in the second and third games, one man stood tall for South Africa.

This time it was Gibbs, who patiently worked the ball around and collected eight boundaries off 123 balls.

Pollock provided the late flourish, clubbing Sehwaag and Tendulkar over the long-on fence in a 43-ball cameo, to help set another testing target for the Indians.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of South Africa innings in the fourth one-day international against India in Port Elizabeth on Wednesday:

SOUTHAFRICA

| | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Smith lbw b Zaheer | 0 | | | |
| Bosman b Sreesanth | 0 | | | |
| Kallis c Dhoni b Kumble | 49 | | | |
| Gibbs not out | 93 | | | |
| De Villiers lbw b Kumble | 13 | | | |
| Boucher lbw b Sehwaag | 29 | | | |
| Kemp c Sehwaag b Tendulkar | 0 | | | |
| Pollock run out | 37 | | | |
| Hall run out | 13 | | | |
| Nel not out | 0 | | | |
| Extras: (b-1, lb-4, nb-2, w-2) | 9 | | | |
| Total: (For 8 wkts 50 overs) | 243 | | | |
| Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-6, 3-75, 4-93, 5-154, 6-155, 7-216, 8-240. | | | | |
| Did not bat: M. Ntini | | | | |
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Zaheer | 8 | 1 | 38 | 1 |
| Sreesanth | 7 | 1 | 29 | 1 |
| Agarkar | 5 | 0 | 33 | 0 |
| Pathan | 7 | 0 | 28 | 0 |
| Kumble | 10 | 0 | 42 | 2 |
| Sehwaag | 5 | 0 | 22 | 1 |
| Tendulkar | 8 | 0 | 46 | 1 |

Valencia put

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The 24-year-old, who has struck five goals in 12 league appearances this campaign, is under contract at the Mestalla until June 2013.

"Villa is a crucial player for us now and in the future," added Soler.

Chelsea sporting director Frank Arnesen is currently in Valencia with the Premiership champions' youth team, who play a friendly against their Valencia counterparts on Wednesday.

Arnesen insisted he was unaware of any interest in Villa when quizzed on the subject by the Spanish media.

He said: "I don't know anything.

"That is an issue of the first team and those matters are dealt with by coach Jose Mourinho and chief executive Peter Kenyon."

Arnesen, a former Valencia player, admitted he was a fan of Villa, but insisted the Blues already possessed a strong squad.

"He is a very good player, but at Chelsea we already have very good players," he added.

Ranatunga bats

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performance. There can be issues within the side, but the country comes first and all these petty things are immaterial," said Ranatunga.

India, on a tour of South Africa, have conceded an unbeatable lead in a five-match one-day series. They lost two matches by over 100 runs with one match rained out. A three-Test series will follow the one-dayers.

"Ganguly is a match-winner and we had the utmost respect for him when we played against India," said 42-year-old Ranatunga, who led Sri Lanka to an epic World Cup triumph in 1996.

"As a captain he showed a lot of aggression as well, and it's he who showed recent Indian teams how to be ruthless. He certainly has been the toughest Indian captain in recent times," Ranatunga said.

"I feel sorry for India. It's a crime to keep out such a talented player, and I don't think India is picking its best team at the moment.

"The instances he must have missed out on personal landmarks, for the sake of the team, are numerous. I love those types of players and teams need them," said Ranatunga.

The former skipper also said India were capable of winning next year's World Cup in the West Indies.

"No team has such a batting line up. When you have Sachin (Tendulkar), (Virender) Sehwaag, (Sourav) Ganguly, (Mohammad) Kaif, Yuvraj (Singh), (Rahul) Dravid and (Mahendra) Dhoni, you can chase any target.

"It's like our batting line up when we won the World Cup," said Ranatunga, a left-handed middle-order batsman who scored 5,105 runs in 93 Tests and 7,456 in 269 one-day internationals.



PHOTO: AFP

LONG-AWAITED RETURN: England Ashes-winning captain Michael Vaughn takes to the field at Richardson Park in Perth on Wednesday to complete his much-anticipated comeback from injury.

Vaughan scores duck on return

Cricket

AFP, Perth

Despite failing to trouble the scorers in his comeback match, former England skipper Michael Vaughan hasn't ruled out a surprise Test return during the current Ashes series.

Vaughan was dismissed for a seven-ball duck as the England Academy XI were beaten by the West Australian Second XI here Wednesday, his first outing since the surgery on his troublesome right knee that sidelined him from the Ashes squad.

But the 2005 Ashes hero was in a buoyant mood after the game, his first since playing for Yorkshire in May.

Vaughan was pleased to get through the match unscathed and, with a game under his belt, said he hoped to accelerate his rehabilitation.

There has been plenty of speculation that Vaughan, who hasn't played Test cricket since November last year, could be in line for a surprise Ashes recall as early as the third Test at the WACA Ground, starting on December 14.

Asked about his Ashes chances, Vaughan wasn't ruling out the possibility.

"Certainly not the second (Test), as that is starting on Friday," he said after the day's play.

Hoggard up for the Ashes fight

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

Matthew Hoggard says England will have to bowl as a team and put pressure back on to the Australian batsmen if they are to stay alive in the Ashes series in Friday's second Adelaide Test.

The tourists are coming off a 277-run hiding from the Ashes opener in Brisbane and seamer Hoggard expects England to lift after the disappointing performance at the Gabba.

Hoggard is expected to share the new ball with Steve Harmison, who has been working hard to recapture his bowling rhythm which spectacularly deserted him in Brisbane, highlighted by his shambolic opening wide delivery.

"It's hard to watch somebody struggling, especially in front of a lot of people and getting abuse from all sides," Hoggard said Wednesday of Harmison's travails.

"He openly admits he didn't bowl well but he's worked hard. He's been putting in the hard yards and he's feeling good about his bowling.

"I think we'll see a different Steve Harmison come Friday morning."

Hoggard was bemused that he

Ctg, Dhaka smell win

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innings lead, the hosts went plunging the rival attack with young left-handed opener Tamim Iqbal smashing 76 off 86 balls with 13 fours and two sixes. However, it was rock-solid Gazi Salahuddin whose 126 off 198 deliveries anchored the Chittagong essay before declaring on 299-8 shortly before close of play.

Salahuddin, who watched Tamim take over charge during the 99-run second wicket stand, hit 16 fours and two sixes.

Skipper Ehsanul Haque was on fire towards the end, cracking 54 off just 48 balls with help of nine sweetly timed boundaries.

Barisal, 13 without loss at stumps, need 362 runs to win.

SYLHET v KHULNA

At the Dhammondi Cricket Stadium, Sylhet skipper Rajin Saleh missed a deserved hundred when he was caught by Manjurul Islam off left-arm spinner Manzarul Islam Rana

"I honestly don't know, this is the first day of what has been a long rehab programme.

"I just have to look to train hard over the next week, play the game next Wednesday and look to play a few more games and see where it takes us."

The England camp has maintained Vaughan would not play until the triangular one-day series, which starts mid-January.

Vaughan said he was already ahead of schedule, as he hadn't planned to play any cricket until January.

Although caught behind without scoring, a buoyant Vaughan said the positives far outweighed the negatives.

"I'm slightly disappointed I didn't get any runs," he said.

"To be honest, today was all about getting back playing cricket, so it is a huge positive for me that I am back on the field.

"It is early stages of a comeback, but six months ago I never thought I would get to the stage of playing cricket again and it was a really tough time.

"For me, it is a good day."

Coming in with his side in trouble at 2-4 in the fifth over, the elegant right-hander comfortably survived five balls from WA first-class pace bowler Ben Edmondson, most passing harmlessly through to the wicketkeeper.

However, when the 32-year-old regained the strike in the following

over he lasted just two more balls, fringe WA seamer Darren Wates having Vaughan caught behind.

Vaughan got an outside edge to a Wates outswinger as he pushed forward tentatively, his innings over almost before he had the chance to feel bat on ball.

The 32-year-old conceded he was desperately shory of match practice, but was confident his batting form would soon return.

Although he only fielded for 25 overs during the WA innings and admitted his fielding workload was limited, he said the knee felt fine.

"Next week hopefully I'll get a few runs and spend a little bit more time in the middle," he said.

"Over the next few weeks we'll be having plenty of practice, plenty of middle practice and I hope to play a full part in next Wednesday's (Academy) game.

"The real test will be when I have to spend the whole day in the field or bat for five hours, to see how the knee responds to that."

Vaughan could have up to four outings before the Perth Test.

His next outing is expected to be in another England Academy game in Perth on December 6.

He is then tipped to play in the Lilac Hill Festival Match on December 8.

If the English are considering recalling Vaughan, he could also play in the two-day clash with Western Australia on December 9 and 10 at the WACA Ground.

was unable to get swing on the Gabba pitch and finished with the unflattering figures of 2-141, although he claimed the first innings wickets of Ricky Ponting and Adam Gilchrist with consecutive balls.

"We didn't bowl particularly well in the last game so everybody's upped the intensity to try and get back into this Test series," the Yorkshire paceman said.

"We're going to have to put in a lot of patience, we're going to have to put the pressure back on the batsmen and make them work hard for their runs.

"We've looked at the areas where we need to improve and hopefully we can put the plans into action come Friday."

Hoggard, who is the team's leading Test wicket-taker with 224 victims, is expecting the ball to "reverse swing" on the abrasive Adelaide Oval wicket, which is expected to crack open during the match.

Reverse swing comes into effect once the ball becomes older and more worn and it moves in the opposite direction to where it would usually swing with no great change in the bowling grip.

"Last time we played here (against South Australia on tour) it swung a little bit," Hoggard said.

"I've been talking to (South Australian skipper) Darren Lehmann who says it reverses here so we'll look after the ball and see if we can get some conventional and reverse (swing)."

The England bowlers used reverse swing to devastating effect in last year's Ashes series triumph over Australia on their home wickets.

"We've shown good resolve and shown that we can compete, especially in the last two days (of the Gabba Test)," he said.

"We batted really well and it was important we put in some good partnerships.

"We dug in and showed them that we can play and that we're here to fight. The England team's got a lot of fighters in it."

Hoggard will be hoping for better results than his last Test match in Adelaide four years ago when he finished with 1-84 and 6-375 for the series at a cost of 62.5.

"I need to take some of the experience from the sub-continent and apply it here, just build up the pressure and realize that we're not going to just blast people out," Hoggard said of his task ahead.

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Glenn didn't bowl

AFP, Adelaide

Glenn McGrath did not bowl in the nets as the Australian team trained here Wednesday ahead of Friday's second Ashes Test against England at Adelaide Oval.

The ageing pace spearhead spent extended time batting in the nets, first against the quicks and then taking throwdowns, but did not bowl.

He later walked out to the centre of the oval for some fielding practice and is yet to prove his left heel has sufficiently recovered from the bruising that curtailed him in the second innings in the first Brisbane Test.

Team physio Alex Kountouris, chairman of selectors Andrew Hilditch and captain Ricky Ponting are all expected to watch him bowl at Australia's final training on Thursday.

Batsman Matthew Hayden said he was in little doubt 36-year-old McGrath would take his place in the team.

"He's in good spirit, Glenn has got a few days to recover as well," Hayden told reporters.

"We're certain of the fact he's going to be playing a huge part in this Test match."

McGrath hit back at his critics when he took 6-50 in the first innings of the Gabba Test.

But selectors have named two extra pacemen Shaun Tait and Mitchell Johnson in case McGrath is not deemed fit enough to last five days of the Adelaide Test.

Hanumant Singh passes away

AFP, Mumbai

Former Indian batsman Hanumant Singh died at a city hospital here on Wednesday morning after complications arising from dengue fever, a cricket board official announced.

Hanumant, who scored a hundred on debut against England at New Delhi in 1963-64, was infected with Hepatitis B after catching the fever, the board's chief administrative officer Ratnakar Shetty said.

Hanumant, who was 67, is survived by his wife, a son and a daughter.

A renowned player of spin bowling, Hanumant scored only 686 runs in Test matches but had more than 12,000 runs with 29 centuries in first-class cricket.

His century against Mike Smith's England team was to remain the only one in his 14 Tests.

Hanumant, of a royal lineage from the desert state of Rajasthan, served in various capacities with the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Indian board including those of match referee, selector and coach.

ECB window for Hair

AFP, London

Darrell Hair could still umpire first-class matches in England next season despite failing to make the full list of senior officials for the 2007 campaign announced by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) here Wednesday.

The Australian, who now lives in Lincoln, central England, was dumped from the International Cricket Council (ICC) elite panel of umpires after Pakistan complained about his role in the historic forfeited fourth Test against England at The Oval in August.

With long-serving umpire David Constant retiring at the end of the 2006 season season, there was speculation that Hair, who remains on the reserve list, would be promoted to the 24-strong full list who between them officiate in the majority of English first-class and county fixtures.

Instead Constant's place has been taken by one-time Tim Robinson, the former England opening batsman, who was previously on the reserve list.

Nevertheless, officials on what is now an eight-strong back-up group, do stand in first-class matches.

Africa, Europe

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20-year-old told Tunisian reporters.

Players whose formative training has been in Europe are highly regarded by African federations eager to boost their competitiveness in the world arena.

European-born players in African national teams are no new phenomenon.

When Algeria played France in a friendly at the Stade de France in 2001, there were as many players born in France on Algeria's side as there were in the French team.

Algeria have been trying to persuade Watford surprise package Hameur Bouazza to join their cause while Moroccan newspapers have in recent weeks highlighted the emergence of 17-year-old Ibrahim Maaroufi, who recently made his debut at Serie A champions Inter Milan.

SL's NZ tour a WC boost

Cricket

AFP, Wellington

Sri Lanka's cricketers say their tour of New Zealand starting Thursday launches a 100-day confidence building mission aiming to peak at the cricket World Cup next March in the West Indies.

The immediate target is to get urgently needed match practice after a month of frustrating rain at home.

Their warm-up match against the Otago provincial side starting in Dunedin Thursday will be their only outing before playing New Zealand in two Tests, two Twenty20 matches and five one-dayers.

"To have five one-dayers and a couple of Twenty20 matches against a good one-day side is excellent practice and development for us going forward towards

Holding's faith in Harmison

Cricket

AFP, Adelaide

West Indies' bowling great Michael Holding believes Steve Harmison is back on track to play a major role for England in the Ashes Test series in Australia.

Harmison rediscovered the rhythm in the Adelaide Oval nets Wednesday he was so badly lacking in the Ashes opener in Brisbane, where his blow-out left him demoralised and cost his side any chance of winning the Gabba Test.

Holding, one of Test cricket's most intimidating fast bowlers in his prime with 249 wickets in 60 Tests, watched Harmison's work-out in the nets.

He has faith the Durham speedster can iron out a slight technical glitch which contributed to him imploding in Brisbane.

Pakistan in driving seat

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dropped three chances to let the tourists' tail add 69 runs after they resumed at 191-6.

Ramdin held on after Ganga fell in the fifth over of the day. Ganga played a casual shot to an incoming delivery from Abdul Razzaq and was caught by Akmal behind the wicket.

Ramdin was happy to make a solid contribution.

"I took it upon myself to take the team as close as possible to Pakistan's total. It was my best half-century because it needed a lot of character and aggression to play with the low-order batsman once we lost Ganga," said Ramdin.

Ganga, who was on 77 overnight, hit nine boundaries during his 304-minute knock.

Pakistan took the second new ball with the West Indies on 213-8 and fast bowler Umar Gul bowled Powell with the second delivery for one to finish with 4-79.

Ramdin, dropped on five by Akmal off leg-spinner Danish Kaneria, took full advantage of the chance and hit Gul for three bound-

aries before reaching his fourth Test half-century.

The 21-year-old Trinidadian drove well and batted solidly to take the West Indies within 44 runs of the Pakistan's first-innings score of 304.

Kaneria finished with 3-62.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the third day of the third and final Test between Pakistan and the West Indies at the National Stadium in Karachi on Wednesday:

PAKISTAN: First innings 304 (Yousuf 102; Collimore 3-57)

WEST INDIES: First innings (191-6)

Gayle c Razzaq b Gul 40

Ganga c Akmal b Razzaq 81

Lara b Gul 0

Sarwan b Gul 0

Chanderpaul c Farhat b Kaneria 36

Morton c Farhat b Kaneria 21

Bravo c Akmal b Kaneria 8

Ramdin run out 50

Powell b Gul 1

Taylor c Akmal b Nazir 1

Collimore not out 8

Extras: (b-5, lb-2, nb-7) 14

Total: (All out in 96 overs) 260

Fall of wickets: 1-51, 2-51, 3-51, 4-

the World Cup," coach Tom Moody said.

"But obviously we've got the first hurdle to cross, which is the Test matches, which we're looking forward to."

New Zealand are third in the world in one-day rankings, ahead of Sri Lanka who are fifth, although the Sri Lankans cruised to a seven-wicket win over the New Zealand Black Caps in the recent Champions Trophy tournament in India.

"So we're coming here feeling comfortable and confident," Moody said.

But he added that foul weather had spoilt the start of the Sri Lankan domestic season, and that consequently the team "haven't had the match practice we'd have liked".

Mahela Jayawardene, who will captain the Test and one-day squads, said the Sri Lankans were expecting pitches offering more

"From what I have seen I don't think there's a major problem," Holding said Wednesday.

"There's just a slight problem that he's having with leaning away at the point of delivery and once you start leaning away, it means you're pushing (wide) the ball instead of driving it from behind, and as soon as he sorts that out he'll be okay.

"As a fast bowler, as a cricketer, as a sportsman you develop some bad habits along the way and you need some expert to help sort those bad habits out," he said.

But Holding, who was known as 'Whispering Death' for his smooth yet hostile bowling action, said England's best hope of levelling the series had to transfer his improvement out to the middle.

"Nets are different from out in the middle," he said.

"This is just getting some confidence back."

bounce and seam in New Zealand than they experienced at home.

"As a team going forward, you have to take challenges ... and perform outside Sri Lanka," he said.

"We've been doing that pretty consistently and hopefully we'll continue to do that."

Sri Lanka has been a side on the rise in recent months, drawing a Test series in England and then thumping the home side 5-0 in subsequent one-dayers.

A 2-0 Test series win at home against South Africa followed, and then an unbeaten march through the qualifying rounds of the Champions Trophy before losses to South Africa and Pakistan saw them miss the semi-finals.

"We want to get a good start here because the World Cup is round the corner and we can take some momentum," Jayawardene said.

Harmison has told teammates he is on the mend after working out the technical flaws that bedevilled him in Brisbane.

"He's in a good mood," new-ball bowling partner Matthew Hoggard said Wednesday.

"Obviously, when you're bowling well in the nets and you're bowling well, you know yourself when the ball comes out if it's feeling good or if it's not.

"He says it's feeling good so hopefully you see a different Steve Harmison in Adelaide.

"He's hitting the bat hard, and he's telling me he knows where it's going.

"He's feeling good and he's feeling that everything's coming out well, so I've got full confidence."

114, 5-153, 6-190, 7-204, 8-213, 9-216.

Bowler

| | | | | |
|---------|----|----|----|---|
| Gul | 24 | 5 | 79 | 4 |
| Nazir | 17 | 3 | 58 | 1 |
| Kaneria | 35 | 12 | 62 | 3 |
| Razzaq | 16 | 5 | 44 | 1 |
| Hafeez | 4 | 1 | 10 | 0 |

PAKISTAN: Second innings

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Hafeez not out | 57 | | | |
| Farhat c Ramdin b Powell | 20 | | | |
| Younis lbw b Gayle | 38 | | | |
| Yousuf not out | 1 | | | |
| Extras: (b-4, lb-10) | 14 | | | |
| Total: (For two wkts in 52 overs) | 130 | | | |
| Fall of wicket: 1-43, 2-122. | | | | |
| Bowler | O | M | R | W |
| Taylor | 11 | 4 | 23 | 0 |
| Collimore | 7 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Powell | 12 | 3 | 35 | 1 |
| Bravo | 10 | 1 | 24 | 0 |
| Gayle | 10 | 2 | 23 | 1 |
| Sarwan | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 |

Toss: Pakistan

Umpires: Daryl Harper (AUS), Mark Benson (ENG)