

## Bryan brothers wins doubles

AFP, Melbourne

Chest-bumping American brothers Bob and Mike Bryan successfully defended their Australian Open men's doubles title Saturday, beating Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman and Max Mirnyi of Belarus 7-5, 7-5.

The top seeded Americans, who lost in the final here in 2004 and 2005 before finally lifting the trophy last year, were on top throughout and never looked like losing.

They served hard and at the body with one player tight on the net to zero in the volleys, allowing the second seeded Bjorkman-Mirnyi team little chance to get through their defences.

They took the first set with a single break in 43 minutes but the second was a tougher affair.

The Bryans, who have made a habit of bumping their chests together after winning crucial points, finally got the break they were chasing in the 12th game.

They ground down Bjorkman's serve to win the title on their sixth championship point in 1hr 33mins.

"We were lucky today," said Bob Bryan. "They are a great team but this has been a perfect start to the year for us."

The two teams are great rivals, playing in their seventh straight final against each other.

Bjorkman and Mirnyi had the edge coming into the match, having won their last three meetings, including the French Open final last year.

It was the Bryans' 11th Grand Slam final having won four previously -- the French Open (2003), US Open (2005), Australian Open (2006) and Wimbledon (2006) to make them the first doubles team to win all four majors in Open-Era history.

Mirnyi paid them tribute.

"I've said it before -- they are the best ambassadors for our sport and they proved it once again today," he said.

Bjorkman and Mirnyi are French Open doubles champions but had never got beyond the semi-finals at Melbourne Park before this year.

Amazingly, it was the first time since 1976 that the top two seeds had met in a men's doubles final here.

## Ronaldo

FROM PAGE 20

about Ronaldo is difficult for me as I am one of his fans. He was already number one in the world when I was a teenager and I dreamed of playing alongside him. "Ronnie" is a great player who can still do alot."

## Stephen glorifies

FROM PAGE 17

with oppressively hot conditions forecast.

Seamer Kyle Mills' comeback could also be delayed because of the heat.

Fleming said the Kiwis wanted to beat Australia, but admitted their main focus was on finishing above England in the tri-series in order to reach the finals.

He said this would be reflected in team selection, with New Zealand to play England again on Tuesday in a match that could decide which side made the finals.

"You have got to prioritise a little bit," he said.

"You want to win each game and I want to beat Australia, but we have to be smart about our resources and look towards the finals, if we can get there."

Fleming said the Black Caps remained confident Australia were within reach despite being unbeaten after five games.

"Of course they are beatable, but you have to play well to do it and we haven't played well enough so far," he said.

"We played okay in Sydney and got close. We've competed in good areas for pockets, just not long enough. I don't think we are too far away."

## 'For my sister'

FROM PAGE 20

to 15 years in jail.

"I have so many good memories of my sister," added Williams.

"I remember just so many, so many things from her.

"She was always so happy for me and Venus. She would come travel with us with her kids sometimes. You know, we had so many unbelievable memories. I take solace in those memories."

Venus and Serena are the youngest of five daughters raised by Richard Williams and Oracene Price, who are now divorced.

Three older daughters -- Yetunde, Isha and Lyndrea -- were the children of Oracene Price and a former husband, Yusef Rasheed.

Williams was written off by many pundits before the tournament after slipping to 81 in the world, and while she wanted to win for Yetunde, she was also awoken by proving her critics wrong.

"It was an awesome win because I had so many critics, so many people talking bad and saying negative things and saying I wasn't fit when I felt that I was really fit and could last three sets and two-and-a-half or three hours, no worries," she said.

"There's a great satisfaction holding up the Grand Slam trophy and proving everyone wrong."



PHOTO: AFP

Bryan brothers Bob (L) and Mike of the United States pose with the men's doubles trophy at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Saturday.

# Afridi, Razzaq recalled

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Fit-again all-rounder Abdul Razzaq and hard-hitting Shahid Afridi were recalled Saturday for Pakistan's five-match one-day series against South Africa starting early next month.

Also back in the 17-man squad is lanky fast bowler Shabbir Ahmed, whose one-year ban over an illegal bowling action ended last month.

"We hope that these players will boost (the) Pakistan team for the one-day series and Razzaq and Ahmed have proved their fitness before our physiotherapist Grant Compton," chief selector Wasim Bari told AFP.

Dashing opener Imran Nazir, 25, also earned a recall after two and a half years, mainly for strong performances in domestic competitions.

"Nazir has shown he has overcome his poor form and we have rewarded him for his good showing in the local competitions," said Bari.

Razzaq, 27, missed the Test series between the two nations because of a calf muscle injury.

Pakistan have already been hit by injuries to key pacemen Shoaib Akhtar and Umar Gul, who have both returned home from South Africa.

The 31-year-old Akhtar, sent as a replacement for the injured Gul, tore his hamstring in the second Test in Port Elizabeth. The 23-year-old Gul twisted his ankle during a warm-up match and played no part in the Test series.

Both face a race against time to win a place in the team for the World Cup in the West Indies, starting in March.

The 26-year-old Afridi was dropped because of poor form. He scored just 115 runs and took 14 wickets in 18 one-day matches last year.

Afridi was, however, confident he would regain his touch in South Africa where he performed well for Griqualand West as an overseas player two years ago.

"I know I have to lift my game

before the World Cup and I am hopeful that I will be able to do that because I know the South African grounds well," Afridi said.

Leg-spinner Danish Kaneria, paceman Shahid Nazir, batsmen Asim Kamal and Faisal Iqbal will return home after the Test series.

Pakistan will play a Twenty20 international against South Africa in Johannesburg on February 2 before the one-day series starts at Centurion on February 4.

The remaining matches will be played in Durban (February 7), Port Elizabeth (February 9), Cape Town (February 11) and Johannesburg (February 14).

### SQUAD

Inzamamul Haq (captain), Younis Khan (vice-captain), Mohammad Hafeez, Yasir Hameed, Imran Farhat, Imran Nazir, Shoaib Malik, Mohammad Yousuf, Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal, Abdul Razzaq, Zulqarnain Haider, Navedul Hasan, Shabbir Ahmed, Mohammad Asif, Abdul Rehman, and Mohammad Sami.

and bounced too high for Boucher to take cleanly, and a diving chance to Jacques Kallis at second slip off Hall four runs later.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the second day of the third Test between South Africa and Pakistan at Newlands on Saturday:

**PAKISTAN:** First innings 157  
**SOUTH AFRICA:** First innings (overnight 131-5)  
Dippenaar lbw b Asif 0  
Smith c Inzamam b Nazir 64  
Amla c Akmal b Asif 2  
Kallis c Akmal b Sami 28  
Prince c Hameed b Kaneira 19  
De Villiers b Kaneria 11  
Harris c Younis Khan b Asif 1  
Boucher not out 40  
Hall c Akmal b Kaneria 4  
Steyn run out (Younis Khan) 3  
Ntini lbw b Sami 0  
Extras: (b-4, lb-4, nb-2, w-1) 11  
Total: (All out in 53 overs) 183  
Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-12, 3-92, 4-107, 5-128, 6-133, 7-133, 8-140, 9-183.

**Bowler** O M R W  
Asif 16 2 53 3

Sami 9 1 41 2  
Nazir 8 0 37 1  
Kanerai 20 6 44 3

**PAKISTAN:** Second innings  
Hafeez c Prince b Steyn 10  
Farhat lbw b Steyn 13  
Hameed c Prince b Hall 35  
Younis Khan c Boucher b Ntini 0  
Yousuf b Hall 18  
Inzamam not out 19  
Akmal st Boucher b Harris 6  
Sami not out 2  
Extras: (b-6, lb-2, nb-1, w-5) 14  
Total: (For 6 wkts in 33 overs) 117  
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-28, 3-44, 4-83, 5-92, 6-111.

**Bowler** O M R W  
Ntini 8 2 29 1  
Steyn 8 1 32 2  
Kallis 3 0 13 0  
Hall 7 1 23 2  
Harris 7 1 12 1

**Umpires:** S Bucknor (WIS), P Parker (AUS)

**Tv umpire:** M Erasmus (RSA)

**Match referee:** C Broad (ENG)

# Giants unafraid of Mirpur

FROM PAGE 17

without any foreign player. On the other hand, Abahani's bid to field Manzarul Rana failed as the all-rounder did not pass a fitness test. The Dhanmondi boys will also miss injured opener Nazmus Sadat for the fifth consecutive game.

Khaled Mashud's presence after he returned from injury in the previous match would be a boost but the Abahani captain is yet to be fit enough to stand behind the stumps.

"It would be 50-50 like any Abahani-Mohammedan match and team strength really does not matter," stated Mashud who thinks that restricting Mohammedan's explosive top-order featuring Junaid and Aftab would be the key to success.

Talking about their season's first meet, Mashud said that result of the Twenty20 match is insignificant.

"It's a new game and they have a good team. Our plus point is that we have been playing well. No team have scored more than 250 against us because of our bowling strength.

"It will be only be our second match at Mirpur so we will have a look at the wicket tomorrow before deciding the line-up," he said when asked whether Talha Jubair's five-wicket haul in his first league match three days ago made any selection headache for him.

Abahani's three-prong pace attack -- Mashrafe-Zia-Shahjada -- has already made the difference but they had to give the ball to Talha as Mashrafe was rested from bowling in the last game in request of the national team management.

Abahani will field Sri Lankan allrounder Sujith Fernando, their latest recruit, in their foreign quota instead of Pakistani batsman Imran Abbas.

POINTS TABLE					
Teams	M	W	L	Pts	
Abahani	6	6	0	12	
Sonargaon	6	5	1	10	
Mohammedan	6	5	1	10	
Old DOHS	6	4	2	8	
Victoria	6	4	2	8	

Biman	6	3	3	6
Pegasus	6	2	4	4
Kalabagan	6	2	4	4
City Club	6	2	4	4
Partex	6	2	4	4
Indira Road	6	1	5	2
Brothers	6	0	6	0

## Kabaddi WC

FROM PAGE 17

Iran, who also finished runners-up in the inaugural World Cup two years earlier, had to remain satisfied with the second place after missing out bronze in the Asian Games in Doha last December.

Pakistan were the only power-houses of the game missing in the three-day event due to visa problems.

Bangladesh and Japan were the losing semifinalists, eliminated by Asia and South Asian Games gold medalists India and Iran respectively.

## TTS, UNO on top

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Table Tennis Sangstha (TTS) and UNO Club won their respective matches in the second division cricket league at the Gaibandha Stadium yesterday.

Both teams won by four wickets as UNO Club chased 98 runs set by Lenin Smriti Sangsad while TTS had a target of 132 to win. Both sides won after losing six wickets in the chase.

## ICC helpless in visa row

PTI, Karachi

The International Cricket Council has said it cannot do much to solve the problems being faced by Pakistan supporters and travel agents in seeking visas for the World Cup to be held in the Caribbean in March-April.

An ICC spokesman said as far as provision of visas for the tournament was concerned, it was not an issue the ICC or the Cricket World Cup Committee could control.

"Neither body can wave a magic wand to address and resolve any issues potential travellers may have. It is a government-to-government matter at a political level, and, as such, it is up to the respective governments involved to address it at that level," he said.

Travel agents and supporters in Pakistan have complained that they were facing problems getting visas as they have to apply to the Trinidad and Tobago consulate in Delhi, authorised by CARICOM (the joint committee of the governments of the nine countries of the West Indies hosting the tournament) to issue visas in South Asia.

Travel agents said they would face a lot of group cancellations if the process were not made easier.

The Pakistan Cricket Board has already asked its foreign ministry and the CWC to help set up a satellite visa office in Pakistan for the tournament. However, the request is still being processed, a PCB spokesman said.

## Kaka's Ronaldo

FROM PAGE 20

overweight and told him he did not feature in his future plans.

Kaka said the three-times FIFA World Player of the Year could still be a key player for Milan.

"Ronaldo's greatest strength, in my opinion, is his ability to decide a match with one moment of brilliance," said the 24-year-old, who played alongside the striker at last year's World Cup in Germany.

"He can be decisive even without the kinds of runs he used to make."

Ronaldo was applauded by Milan's fans when he appeared in the stands at the San Siro to watch the team draw 2-2 with AS Roma in the Italian Cup on Thursday.

"He came to see us after the match. He seemed very happy," revealed Kaka.

"He has chosen Milan ahead of another, much richer offer. That means he still feels he has a lot to give in a league that really counts."

Milan captain Paolo Maldini joined in the praise of the 30-year-old striker.

"After Maradona, he is the strongest opponent I've ever faced," the defender said, recalling his former duels with Ronaldo, who played for Inter Milan between 1997 and 2002.

"He is still one of the best players in the world. If he arrives, we will make a big jump in quality."x

# Astle puzzle remains

Cricket

RICHARD BOOCK

Some of our more cynically-minded cricket followers -- and I include myself in this category -- might be having just a little difficulty digesting the reasons and explanations behind Nathan Astle's shock retirement decision.

The man who last year said he was ready to throw the game away if the selectors continued to play silly-buggers with his career could hardly have picked a stranger time or place to step down from cricket.

Nor could he have given a more puzzling explanation.

Here we are, halfway through what's supposed to be a high-powered tri-series in Australia, perched on one of the most isolated outreaches on the planet -- a game against the world champions just a day away -- and Astle would like us to accept that he's merely had a change of heart.

Perhaps if he had been in the middle of a purple patch with the bat or at the end of a series, it would be easier to swallow the assertion that he's woken up one morning and suddenly decided to walk.

But the facts are he's been struggling with the bat, threatened by the selectors and shuffled

around the order by the coach, to the extent that his World Cup place was starting to look anything but secure.

On top of that, New Zealand's opening batting combination has reached a crisis point this season.

Add to the mix the resurgent form of former New Zealand opener Lou Vincent, who has been recalled on the back of some solid innings in the domestic State Shield competition, and it's clear the pressure was starting to build on Astle and the selectors.

So, what about the idea that coach John Bracewell and the management team have approached Astle, offering to assist him through a dignified retirement rather than announcing that he's been axed?

It's certainly worth considering, not only because Astle seems to have lost the hand-eye co-ordination that made him such a threat in previous years, but also because of the remarks he made about retirement last month.

At the time, Astle was being interviewed in the lead-up to the first Test against Sri Lanka and his comments then contrasted wildly with the slightly rehearsed reasoning he came out with yesterday (Friday).

"I'm really enjoying it at the moment," Astle said last month. "I

have to get to the World Cup first and then, maybe (I'll play) one more year or more -- who knows?"

"All I can say right now is that I'm enjoying my cricket and that I'm pretty much taking it as it comes.

"I think you know when it's time to walk away and I've got to say that I don't feel like that at the moment -- and I don't think I will in the near future. In fact, I don't think about retirement at all now."

Which makes you wonder about his comments yesterday (Friday), when he justified his decision with the rider that he'd been "fighting this day" for the past eight months, and was close to making himself unavailable for the tri-series.

Astle also mentioned that he'd made the decision over the past week and was the "only" one who realised, when he walked out to bat against England at Adelaide last Tuesday, that he was about to play his final international innings.

If that were the case, then why on earth would he continue on to Perth to announce his retirement? Why would he insist on carrying on to a distant city -- the best part of an eight-and-a-half-hour flight from his hometown of Christchurch -- to announce that he didn't want to play?

It simply doesn't add up. (Richard Boock writes for New Zealand Herald)

# Morgan backs Fletcher

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

David Morgan, the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB), believes the England team are at their "lowest ebb" for four years but has reiterated his support for both Duncan Fletcher and Andrew Flintoff in the wake of their latest mauling by Australia.

Speaking from Adelaide a few hours after England had plumbed new depths in the Commonwealth Bank one-day series to lose to Australia by nine wickets, Morgan described the situation as "extremely disappointing".

He went on: "If you look at the cycles between World Cups, we've had a lot of success. But this is the lowest ebb since the end of the last one in 2003. It doesn't come much worse than this."

Even so Morgan was at pains to defend Fletcher, who retained his "wholehearted support" despite his poor record as a one-day coach. Since Fletcher took over in 1999 England have won only a third of their games against the major nations and their recent record -- eight victories out of 31 -- is much worse.

"It is quite obvious that Duncan has been targeted by the Australian media and much of the British media," said Morgan. "But to lay all the blame at his door is a mistake.

He's been very unlucky in not having Michael Vaughan at the helm. Andrew Flintoff has done very well in this series but the people around him simply haven't performed. Someone pointed out to me that the side that lost here contained only three of the 2005 Ashes regulars (Andrew Strauss, Ian Bell and Flintoff). That sums up our difficulties."

Part of the remit of the ECB review into England's miserable winter is to look at ways in which England can win a global one-day event before the end of 2011. Right now that seems a fanciful notion.

Asked whether Fletcher's position would be in jeopardy if England fall at the first meaningful hurdle for the fourth World Cup in succession, Morgan said he was "very hopeful England will have a surprisingly good World Cup".

He was lukewarm about the idea of bringing in a separate coach for the one-day side. "We'll consider anything that is for the good of our international performance," he said. "But I would need a lot of convincing that we could have two coaches any more than we had two captains (Mike Atherton and Adam Hoggie) in the late 1990s."

Pakistan made a bad start to the final Test against South Africa in Cape Town. Having squared the three-match series in Port Elizabeth earlier in the week, they lost the toss and were bowled out for 157 by tea, with Makhaya Ntini and Jacques

## Dortmund win a thriller

FROM PAGE 20

home side on and a mistake from Brzenska let Makaay in for Bayern's second just minutes before the break.

The Dortmund defender tried to shield the ball back to his goal-keeper, but both left the ball to each other, allowing Bayern's Dutch striker to poach his 10th goal of the campaign.

As in the first half, it took the home side 12 minutes in the second period to find the back of the net again.

And it was not only the timing of the goal which mirrored that of the first half, with the same players combining in almost an identical manner to bring Dortmund level.

## Records await

FROM PAGE 20

more tennis milestones should he overturn Gonzales.

He will join American Bill Tilden as joint fifth all-time Grand Slam title leader with 10 behind Pete Sampras's 14.

The mercurial Swiss has already equalled Australian Jack Crawford's all-time record for seven consecutive Grand Slam final appearances and could become the 14th player to successfully defend his Australian championship.

Federer is also bidding to become only the fourth man to win a Grand Slam title without dropping a set, the last being Bjorn Borg at the 1980 French Open.

Gonzales may never have beaten Federer but he sees Sunday's final as a new opportunity.

"Roger is the number one by far but on Sunday we only have to play one match, there's only one match left in this tournament" he said.

"I've lost many times to him but I am playing much better than the last time I played him. In tennis you always have a new opportunity and I have a really nice opportunity now.

"I'm playing the most important match in my life and he's the best player of the last many years. He's winning all the time. He has to lose sometime."

Kallis taking four wickets each. But they then reduced South Africa to 131 for five.

## Kolkata might replace Pune

CRICINFO, undated

Kolkata's Eden Gardens is likely to host the first of the four-match series between India and Sri Lanka on February 8 after it was found that Pune, originally meant to host the match, was facing problems.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) requested the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) to replace Pune as the venue with Eden Gardens as according the board's rotation policy Kolkata is scheduled to host a match after Pune. Interestingly the request came a day after the CAB elected Prasun Mukherjee, the Kolkata Police Commissioner, as its new president following the resignation of Jagmohan Dalmiya who was banned for life by the BCCI for misuse of funds.

Dalmiya and the current BCCI administration had been on opposite sides at the last board elections in which Sharad Pawar, the current president of the BCCI, came to power. The BCCI stopped all subsidies and grants to the CAB after Dalmiya's alleged misappropriation of funds.

Mukherjee confirmed that Shashank Manohar, the BCCI vice-president, had asked the CAB whether they were prepared to host the match and that the CAB had requested the board to forward a formal offer in this regard. "Then we can take a decision," Mukherjee told PTI.

## WI defy

FROM PAGE 1

Yuvraj, fit again after suffering a knee ligament injury in November, returned to the team along with veteran spinner Anil Kumble.

Lara was back for the West Indies after missing the previous match in Cuttack on Wednesday with a sore knee.

The tourists rested in-form batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul and brought in Lendl Simmons and Emrit for the first time in the series.

The final 15-man squads for the World Cup to be held in the Caribbean in March-April, have to be named by February 13.

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the Indian innings in the third one-day international against the West Indies at the Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Saturday:

<b>INDIA</b>					
Uthappa c Simmons b Gayle	70				
Gambhir c Simmons b Powell	0				
Raina c Lara b Taylor	23				
Tendulkar c Morton b Bravo	60				
Dravid c Emrit b Gayle	57				
Yuvraj c b Bravo	10				
Karthick c Ramdin b Bravo	8				
Agarkar c Morton b Samuels	2				
Powar c b Taylor	5				
Kumble not out	3				
Sreesanth c Morton b Bravo	2				
Extras: (lb-13, nb-2, w-13) 28					
Total: (All out in 48 overs)	268				
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-95, 3-126, 4-232, 5-237, 6-255, 7-255, 8-259, 9-265.					
<b>Bowler</b>					
Taylor	O	M	R	E	W
Powell	6	1	39	1	1
Emrit	5	0	34	0	0
Bravo	9	0	39	4	4
Gayle	10	0	57	2	2
Samuels	10	0	41	1	1