

Flower named as assistant to Moores

AFP, London

Former Zimbabwe wicketkeeper Andy Flower is to be Peter Moores's new assistant coach with the England national side in place of Matthew Maynard.

The 39-year-old Flower has been playing for Essex but announced his retirement from playing in order to take up the position which follows on from his work as a batting coach with the academy.

Moores said: "Andy will bring to the support staff a wealth of international experience as well as a clear understanding of the domestic game in England and Wales.

"I am sure all the players will respond to his style and enjoy working with him."

Moores took over from Duncan Fletcher as England coach following the disappointing performance from the English at the World Cup in the Caribbean where they failed to reach the semifinals.

Flower scored 16,379 first-class runs at an average of 54.05 including 4794 runs at 51.54 in 63 Tests. He also claimed 160 victims behind the stumps.

"From my time working with Peter at the academy, I know that we shall work very well together and I am excited about entering into this new challenge of coaching an international team."

Murali

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"I need to be involved in the game to be fully motivated and interested."

Muralidaran's international teammate Sanath Jayasuriya turns 38 next month.

But he believes there is no reason why the star opener, or their 33-year-old colleague Chaminda Vaas, cannot continue for some time yet.

He said: "Sanath is very fit and although he is nearly 38 he can play in any ODI side. He can play as long as he is fit.

"And knowing Sanath he looks after himself so well. And Vaasy is just 33.

"I don't think Vaas should be looking to retire. He should maintain his fitness and continue and should be looking at the next World Cup too."

Muralidaran, with 674 Test wickets and 455 one-day scalps, will be heading to England next week to start his third stint with county side Lancashire.

Lanka cry foul

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stringent application of "Law 42" on fair and unfair play to ensure only the approved protection equipment was used.

Mathivanan said Sri Lanka Cricket would discuss the issue before deciding whether to raise it in London.

Sri Lankan newspapers have carried letters from irate fans accusing the Australians of resorting to unfair tactics to win the game.

"The question now asked by most Sri Lankan fans is whether the squash ball was used as a performance enhancing device," said The Island, a privately-owned newspaper.

Fans say the use of the ball gave Gilchrist, who had a poor run leading to the final, an extra edge over Sri Lanka's bowlers.

Tickets go slow

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He informed that there were long queues for tickets of the second match, to be held at the same venue on May 12, but the tickets of the second match will only be available from today.

"Because of holiday (Saturday) people are more interested to see the second match," he added.

Roeder steps

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Newcastle were left with a hefty bill after the departures of Souness and his backroom staff, and with hefty debts, they could do without having to fork out scarce funds to land his latest successor.

Whoever the new man is, he, like his most recent predecessors, faces the task of bringing success to a big club whose supporters are among the most demanding in the game.

Roeder was desperate for time to turn things around after a dreadful run of injuries, but his position was virtually untenable when the fans turned on him for the first time after Saturday's game.

Much of their anger, however, was directed at chairman Freddy Shepherd, who has fought off two takeover bids in recent months, and he now faces the task of appointing a fifth manager in less than 10 years.

Roeder's replacement will inherit a squad which is packed with talent on paper at least, but has a depressing capacity for under-achievement and is in serious need of a radical overhaul.

New faces on Pak team



AFP, Lahore

Pakistan Monday named two uncapped players in a 16-man squad for their three-match series against Sri Lanka in Abu Dhabi later this month, aiming for a fresh start after a disastrous World Cup campaign.

Pakistan were eliminated in the first round of the mega event, held in the Caribbean in March-April, after losing to the West Indies and Ireland.

Pakistan's campaign was also badly hit after their English coach Bob Woolmer died in Jamaica on March 18, a day after their defeat against Ireland. His death was treated as a murder and is still being investigated.

Pakistan has yet to decide on a replacement for Woolmer, having advertised the post last month. The Pakistan Cricket Board says it will likely appoint a temporary coach for the team later this week.

In a further upheaval for the side, team captain Inzamam-ul-Haq quit one-day cricket and his potential replacement, Younis Khan, turned down an offer to lead

the side, citing personal reasons.

That forced Pakistan's cricket authorities to appoint young Shoaib Malik as skipper for one year, beginning with the Abu Dhabi series with matches scheduled for May 18, 20 and 22.

Left-handed spin bowler and allrounder Fawad Alam, 21, a notable performer in the domestic season, gets his first chance in this side while left-arm paceman Najaf Shah, 22, also breaks into the national team after being constantly ignored.

Spearhead Mohammad Asif has returned to the squad after missing the World Cup because of an elbow injury.

Asif, along with express pacesman Shoaib Akhtar, was involved in a doping scandal last year.

Akhtar was not considered for selection after he failed to prove his fitness from a knee injury.

Chief selector Salahuddin Ahmed told AFP Pakistan would now make a fresh start after the World Cup "and hope that this team settles before the hectic new season in which we play the Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa, host South Africa, tour India and then host Australia."

Younis, leg-spinner Danish

Kaneria and allrounder Azhar Mahmood were unavailable for selection due to commitments in English county cricket after being part of Pakistan's squad for the World Cup.

Ahmed said the new selection committee would infuse new blood gradually.

"The new selection committee is in the power play stages and will take time to make this team a stronger outfit," said Ahmed, who replaced Wasim Bari as chief selector after the World Cup last month.

Opener Salman Butt, discarded last year, will stage a comeback while all-rounder Abdul Razzaq has recovered from the knee injury which forced him to miss the World Cup.

A new vice-captain will also be announced later, the Pakistan Cricket Board said.

SQUAD

Shoaib Malik (captain), Salman Butt, Imran Nazir, Yasir Hameed, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Yousuf, Fawad Alam, Shahid Afridi, Abdul Razzaq, Kamran Akmal, Abdur Rehman, Mohammad Sami, Mohammad Asif, Umar Gul, Rao Iftikhar, Najaf Shah.

Henin lifts Warsaw title



AFP, Warsaw

Justine Henin claimed her third title of the year on Monday when she beat Ukraine's Alona Bondarenko 6-1, 6-3 in the rain-delayed final of the Warsaw Cup.

Rain prevented the match being played on Sunday.

The Belgian world number one, who earlier took the honours in Dubai and Doha, is undefeated in her nine matches in Warsaw after also winning the event in 2005.

Bondarenko was competing in her first final since winning her first career title in Luxembourg in September 2006.

Henin was never seriously stretched in the 61 minutes match, and did little more than she was required to win.

At times the Belgian showed periods of real class, especially with

her powerful backhand, but she also allowed Bondarenko back into a match was that clearly lost to her.

Having broken in the first game, Henin went on to break again to lead 4-1 and for the set, surrendering only three points on serve.

But after winning the opening two games of the second set at love some careless play and a fourth double-fault allowed Bondarenko to break back.

Then after levelling at 2-2 the plucky Ukrainian held three break points on Henin's serve, but Henin raised her level once more.

With Bondarenko smelling the possibility of a third set Henin raised her game still further, breaking to love to lead 5-3 and holding off a break point as she closed out the match.

"I played a very consistent match," said Henin. "I just can be happy about what happened. It was pretty hard yesterday.

"It was cold, it was freezing here,

and it's a little bit sad we have to play the final on Monday morning. It's the first time of my career. But finally it was a good day today.

"In the second set I lost a little bit of my intensity. When I was leading 2-0 in the second, things were going a little bit too easy at that time and I lost my concentration for a few games.

"It's good I was able to keep my service game at that time (2-2). It was a very important game. And then finally at the end of the match I was pretty aggressive again."

Bondarenko re-enters the top 30 after her run to the final and treated the match as a learning experience.

"I enjoyed the experience to play Justine and hope next time I play better," said Bondarenko. "I wasn't hitting the ball hard enough to win today. I was very nervous in the first set, but in the second set I started playing a little better."

Novak triumphs in Estoril



AFP, Estoril

Serb Novak Djokovic rode a rollercoaster to his third title of the season as he outlasted Richard Gasquet 7-6 (9/7), 0-6, 6-1 to win the Estoril Open on Sunday.

Djokovic went through every emotion as he added the clay title to an Adelaide victory in January and Miami last month.

The win took just over two hours as both men negotiated curves and roundabouts before the world number five claimed the win.

"This was a tough match and a great victory for me," said Djokovic, whose 31 wins lead the ATP this season.

"The conditions were tough and so was Richard.

"I had to come back in the third set after losing the second, it feels great. I've played several matches this week in windy conditions," he said of what is becoming a trademark at the Estadio Nacional.

"That helped me and played an important role. I learned something in each match, I was able to hold on today."

The pair will both fly on Monday to Rome for the Masters Series event. Gasquet, seeded 13th, begins the first round against Fernando Verdasco

while number five Djokovic has a bye.

"I was glad to play this final but Novak showed his game today," said Gasquet. "I didn't play my best game and that's not enough against him."

Djokovic improved to 5-2 in ATP finals. Gasquet, 15th in the world, was playing his first final since winning Lyon last October.

Gasquet stands 22-9 on the season after reaching the quarter-finals or better five times.

The first set became a 77-minute marathon, with Djokovic forced to twice save set points.

As it went into a tiebreaker, the Serb found form when it counted most, saving three more break points back to back before clinching the set on his own first opportunity.

But Gasquet refused to lay down, dominating in the rapid-fire second for a 6-0 sweep which required just 23 minutes.

Djokovic regained the momentum in the third, reaching 5-1 as Gasquet produced his fourth double-fault.

The Serb claimed the victory a game later on the first of three match points.

German Greta Arn won a surprise women's title as the 28-year-old fought to victory over teenaged Viktoria Azarenka 2-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/3).

She was only the second qualifier

to win the title and saved a pair of match points along the way as she served in the tenth game of the final set.

Arn, ranked 176, was playing the first final of her career.

The victory was hard-fought, with the German almost letting go of a 4-2 lead in the final set before scraping through with a tiebreak victory.

"I cannot explain this feeling," said Arn. "I am happy and I am just enjoying it, it is just so nice."

"You start to believe in yourself more and it is a positive feeling."

"I won today with my experience, she's young and made some mistakes that an older player may not make."

Arn's modest ranking will rise by 50 percent to around the 120 mark on the WTA.

Consistency

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He however termed India as very strong opponents despite missing some star cricketers in the one-day squad.

"There are a number of batsmen who have healthy average and their attack is also not bad. But nothing would stop me if I can play according to my plan," said the country's most talented batsman.



PHOTO: AFP

Australian MotoGP rider Casey Stoner from the Ducati Team (R) leads the race ahead of Yamaha rider Valentino Rossi (L) and Suzuki rider John Hopkins (behind) during the MotoGP race at the Grand Prix of China on the Shanghai International Circuit 06 May 2007.

Stoner rules in China

AFP, Shanghai

Sensational Casey Stoner powered his Ducati MotoGP to victory in the Grand Prix of China here Sunday, coming out on top of a fierce dogfight with seven-time world champion Valentino Rossi.

The Australian ace swept round the 5.3-kilometre Shanghai circuit in 44m 12.891secs, with Italy's Rossi 3.036 seconds off the pace on his Yamaha, and American John Hopkins third on a Suzuki for his first podium.

Stoner, 21, the winner here in the 250cc class two years ago, started from fourth but took the lead on the first lap, setting the stage for a tight battle with the Italian master in the season's fourth race.

"It was a really difficult race today and with pressure from Valentino on the rear I made a couple of small mistakes," Stoner said.

"I think both of us were pushing quite hard."

Under warm sunshine and in front of 28,000 fans the two standouts battled from the opening seconds, with Rossi squeezing past on corners time and again, only for Stoner on his more power-

ful bike to roar past on the circuit's long straights.

With seven laps remaining a late-braking Rossi overshot the first corner, taking a trip through the grass and dropping to third behind Hopkins and sealing Stoner's victory.

Rossi eventually caught Hopkins in the race's closing moments, but rued the error that he said cost him the race.

"I tried to attack him because the braking on my bike was very good and I was quite strong," the 28-year-old Italian told reporters.

"I tried again on the straight but I went too far and I had to brake too deeply, and probably if I had not made this mistake I would have won."

"The championship is long and I will come back in Europe," he added.

Stoner and Ducati have shown top form early this season, chalking up two victories in three races prior

to Shanghai and many expected them to win here despite Rossi's record-setting lap on Saturday.

The legendary Rossi, nicknamed "The Doctor," made it clear Saturday he would be in the hunt for the trophy when he smashed by more than 1.6 seconds the circuit record set by Spaniard Dani Pedrosa last year.

The victory in Shanghai now gives Stoner 86 points in the championship table, Rossi 71, and Spanish Honda rider Dani Pedrosa who finished fourth here 41, as the racers head to France in two weeks.

Marcos Melandri on a Ducati moved up to fourth with 41 points, but was unable to hold off pressure from Pedrosa as the Italian took fifth.

Meanwhile, Hopkins jumped four places to fifth in the standings with 39 points, as the Californian has shown improving form in the

2007 season, finishing fourth in Qatar and sixth in Turkey two weeks ago.

"I'm so happy with the race," said Hopkins, 23, who started from second after showing blistering pace all weekend.

For defending world champion American Nicky Hayden, it was another sub-par performance, finishing 12th after tumbling hard when Spaniard Toni Elias crashed into him on the first lap.

World champion Jorge Lorenzo of Spain was unassailable in the 250cc as he raced off from pole to take his third chequered flag of the year. Countryman and Aprilia rider Alvaro Bautista beat Italy's Andrea Dovizioso on a Honda for second.

The Czech Republic's Lukas Pesek won a thriller in the 125cc bikes, manoeuvring his Derbi bike past Spaniards Hector Febel and Esteve Rabat on a Honda in the closing laps of the race.

Real prevail in a thriller

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At the other end of the table, Levante improved their chances of survival and pushed relegation-threatened Gimnastic Tarragona closer to the precipice with a 2-0 win over the Spanish first division's bottom club on Sunday.

"This victory has done a lot to relieve the anxiety that's been gripping this team recently," said Levante coach Abel Resino after their first win in 11 outings.

Gimnastic were dealt a cruel blow when Cesar Navas headed a cross from Levante winger Rigamustapha into his own net after 26 minutes.

Six minutes before the break, an unmarked Rigamustapha found the net himself. Levante are now three points above the relegation zone while Gimnastic are nine points away from safety.

Gimnastic will be relegated next week if they lose to fellow strugglers Real Sociedad, who are in penultimate position, and Levante win at Celta Vigo.

Celta themselves are in a perilous position and remain third from bottom after going down 1-0 at Villarreal.

Hiristo Stoichkov's team couldn't break down Villarreal's solid defence and Guille Franco headed the only goal of the game after 68 minutes.

"I'm still optimistic that we will survive. All we've got to do is turn some of the opportunities we make into goals, but we can't afford to fall short again (against Levante next week)," reflected a disappointed Stoichkov.

Athletic Bilbao, who have spent most of the season in relegation trouble, got a vital point with a 0-0 draw at Recreativo Huelva, despite having to spend the last 22 minutes with just 10 men.

Real Mallorca added to Osasuna's miserable week, after their elimination from the UEFA Cup semifinals on Thursday, with a 3-1 victory for their seventh successive home win.

Costacurta

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the Champions League and five in the Italian Cup.

Costacurta began his career with third division Monza in 1986 and spent one year there before joining AC Milan, with whom he has been ever since.

With AC Milan he has won seven Serie A titles and four European Cups.

He also made 59 appearances for Italy between 1991 and 1998.

Maradona

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Maradona, 46, who has struggled with cocaine and alcohol abuse for years, was hospitalized for in April suffering from hepatitis linked to heavy drinking.

Regarded as one of the greatest figures in world football, Maradona played for Barcelona and Napoli and captained his country to victory in the 1986 World Cup.

But his career on and off the field has been marred by repeated drug and alcohol abuse. The ex-Argentina World Cup captain and Barcelona star was hospitalized in 2000 and 2004 for heart attacks provoked by drug abuse.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Thick slice
5 Easter-egg adornment
8 Advantage
12 Stead
13 Author
14 Money of Iran
15 Pressing need?
16 Classroom missile
18 Hit song from "Flashdance"
20 Raised platforms
21 — podrida
23 Young seal
24 Hackneyed
28 Sulk
31 Exist
32 Locations
34 Caviar, essentially
35 Kennel cry
37 Item in a cedar closet
39 Work unit
41 Horse-drawn carriage
42 Biblical prophet
45 Experts
49 Sometimes it hits the fan
51 Bill
52 Enrages
53 Zero
54 Bigfoot's cousin
55 Mileage, maybe (Abbr.)
56 Crucial
57 — out (supplement)
58 Soprano's companions
59 Slender
60 Old Italian money
61 Billion years (Var.)
62 Toe woe
63 Make a denial
64 Shill bark of fan
67 Oklahoma city
68 Metallic element
69 Migration of a sort
70 Big wind
71 Right angles
72 Spigot
73 Clerical garments
74 Sopranos' companions
75 Islet
76 Raw rock
77 Sets free
78 With intent to kill
79 D.C. figure, for short
80 Silthery fish
83 Provider of
84-Across
85 Sermoneer, often
86 "See ya"
87 Tie up the phone
88 Footnote abbr.
89 Gangs wear
90 Williams or Snow
91 Cheat at hide-and-seek
92 London gallery name
93 Late-breaking development
94 Whopper

Solution time: 24 mins.

STIRP OESSA
MARINO BOATER
TRIVET ORTEGA
SAME AYES POM
TUTU AGO
GOT MOCK UNDO
EUROPEAN UNION
EVIL STILL TEE
ELF ACID
GEL OINK OTTO
ORISON EMPIRE
UNFOLD REELED
TEENSY STYLE

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CRYPTOQUIP

CAD ARYADTC-JIEXREY
IQLBEC QADQXDJ RE CAD
R.J.T. TALBVW YDC CAD CRCVD
LK IBWRCLJ RE QARDK.
Saturday's Cryptquip: A COUPLE OF CELEBS
HAVE BEEN FOUND IN A VERY LETHARGIC
STATE. I GUESS THEY ARE STUPOR-STARS.
Today's Cryptquip Clue: C equals T