



PHOTO: AFP

Asafa Powell (C) of Jamaica leads the pack as he wins the men's 100-metre of the Artur Takac memorial meet in Belgrade on Tuesday.

Powell shines in season opener

AFP, Belgrade

Jamaica's 100 metres world record holder Asafa Powell impressed on his opening race of the season here on Tuesday winning in a time of 9.97 seconds to record the first time ever under 10sec in Serbia.

Powell, who has been off injured for several weeks with tendinitis in his right knee, easily beat the home of the Dutch Antilles Churandi Martina, who timed 10.11sec, while another, Jamaican Michael Frater was third in 10.19sec.

Powell was extremely relaxed and after the race saluted the record 20,000 spectators who turned up to see the Commonwealth champion become the first athlete this season to run under 10sec.

"I was under pressure because it was my first race of the season," admitted Powell.

"However I am happy with my performance. The weather was superb and it was an extremely well organised event."

To date my season has been disturbed but I am feeling very relaxed and hungry for more competition."

Powell will next race at the meeting in Eugene, Oregon, on June 10, probably over 200m, before returning to Europe for the first Golden League meeting in Oslo on June 15.

Powell's compatriot Sherone Simpson, the fastest woman in the world last season, was also set to make her debut but had to pull out during the warm-up with a painful thigh.

In her absence Bulgarian Yvet Lalova prevailed in her first 100m in two years after being out of a serious knee injury.

America's 2000 Olympics 400m hurdles champion Angelo Taylor showed he is no slack performer over the flat 400m as he strode home in another time under 45sec, 44.98.

Kenya's Moses Maisai put in another noteworthy performance on the night timing the best mark of the season for the 5,000m of 13min, 08.81sec.

Testing time

FROM PAGE 17

Cameronian Soleiman Nchouhaut, the yellow-orange hair who has trained with the side for two days and last-minute arrival Obi Michael John, namesake of Chelsea's Nigerian superstar. The striker arrived in the capital last night from Vietnam.

Ahanni, who wrested the responsibilities of coaching on old-horse Amaleesh Sen after letting go Argentine coach Diego Cruciati, retained Ghanaian forward Awdud Ibrahim.

Manager Satyajit Das Rupu told that Argentine defender Mariano Caporale has ensured his return after taking care of some family affairs in Buenos Aires.

Lower half sides Rahmatganj, Chittagong Abahani, Farashganj and Arambagh all have already included new faces.

12TH WEEK FIXTURES

May 30: Mukti Jodha v Chittagong Mohammand (BNS)
June 1: Brothers v Farashganj (BNS); Khulna Abahani v Chittagong Abahani (Khulna Stadium); June 2: Arambagh v Rahmatganj (BNS); June 3: Russell v Mohammedan

Simon could be back

AFP, Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

Simon Jones could be back bowling by Sunday after seeing a specialist in Loughborough over his knee problems.

The England paceman missed most of last season after surgery in America and inflammation of the joint has continued to plague the 28-year-old this term.

Jones will miss the Championship game with Essex on Wednesday but could play the weekend's Friends Provident Trophy match with Hampshire at Swansea.

The bowler has managed just 37 overs in the Championship so far this season.

Sarwan out of tour

AFP, Cricket

AFP, Leeds

West Indies captain Ramaresh Sarwan was ruled out on Tuesday of the remainder of his side's Test and one-day series in England after injuring his shoulder in the second Test at Headingly, tour manager Michael Findlay announced.

Sarwan injured himself while chasing a ball to the boundary on the first day of the second Test against England here at Headingly and fell heavily on his right shoulder.

Sarwan was unable to bat in either innings as West Indies were beaten by an innings and 283 runs - their largest Testinnings defeat of all-time.

Unfortunately Sarwan's injury will take approximately six weeks to heal and as a result he will not be able to take any further part in this tour," Findlay said here on Tuesday at the squad's hotel.

Sarwan said: "I am very disappointed that I would not be able to continue on tour. But I have spoken with the players and wished them well for the remainder of the Test series and the Twenty20 games and the one-day internationals."

"I have confidence that the boys will be able to rebound after the defeat at Headingley and give a better account of themselves and the team

Glamorgan captain David Hemp said: "It's very frustrating for Simon because his knee keeps swelling up."

Simon played no part in Monday's three-wicket loss to Surrey in the Friends Provident Trophy at Cressell, in a match that saw his county's bowling resources stretched to the limit.

As well as Jones, former skipper Robert Croft and Andrew Davies were both missing, while Damien Wright pulled up after four balls and teenager James Harris was absent taking exams.

"I feel sorry for Simon, as he is resting his knee and doing everything he is told," Hemp added.

"He is taking 10 days off or a week off after a game as stipulated by the ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board), but to come back

after that with the knee still swollen is very disappointing.

"Simon gets treated by us and he is in constant consultation with the ECB physios, but the fact that it's swollen up again after a period of rest is a bit concerning and he's gone back up to talk to them."

Wright injured a thigh muscle during Monday's one-day match at Cressell, and faces a spell of two to four weeks on the sidelines.

Spinner Croft, who sustained a calf strain last week at Swansea, is again doubtful and will have a late fitness test to see if he will figure against Essex.

Glamorgan call up Michael O'Shea, Nicky Peng and Gareth Rees for their first Championship appearances of the summer, while Harris is also available following his AS-level exams.

Kerr dies at 96

CRICINFO, undated

Jack Kerr, who played seven Tests for New Zealand in the 1930s and later went on to become the president of New Zealand Cricket, died in Christchurch on Sunday at the age of 96.

At the time of his death he was the second oldest living Test cricketer, after ten days younger than Eric Tindall, who toured England with him in 1937. He is the third longest lived Test player of all time, being Tindall and Francis MacKinnon.

World War II veteran, Kerr maintained a link with cricket after his playing days, taking up coaching and the administration of the game. He was the manager of the New Zealand team which toured South Africa in 1953-54 and he also had a stint as the chairman of the New Zealand Cricket Council.

"Jack (Kerr) made a significant contribution to New Zealand Cricket and the New Zealand Cricket Foundation over a number of years and his support was warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated," New Zealand Cricket Chairman Sir John Anderson said.

Kerr, who was an accountant by profession, was a right-hand opening batsman who had a long domestic career. He scored 4839 runs in first-class cricket at an average of 32.19. He was at his best in 1935-36 when he made 146 not out and 71 for Canterbury against Percy Holmes's MCC tourists, and followed up with two centuries in the unofficial "Tests" - 105 not out at Wellington and 132 at Christchurch.

Both top seeds, Roger Federer and Justine Henin, were due to be in action later in the day as were both of the Williams sisters, Serena and Venus, and France's top hope, reigning Wimbledon champion Amelie Mauresmo.

GM Ziaur Rahman, who lost to Nasir in the last round, drew with Lalith Babu of India, GM Niaz Mursheed drew with FM Tabir Rahman, IM PDS Girinath of India beat FM Rezaul Haque, FM Abu Sufian beat Mohammad Javed, Pakistani IM Mahmood Lodhi defeated Mohammad Ali, FM Mehdil Hasan Parag drew with Minhazuddin Ahmed Sagar, FM Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon beat Debaraj Chatterjee and Monir Hossain of Sohel Chowdhury.

"There can be only one reason behind this kind of meeting that everybody is accountable," said a member of the team management smilingly.

"I am pleased to see him enjoying his success because not only is he entertaining to watch but I have always found young man, who has an enormous thirst for knowledge of how he can become the best player in the world."

"As confident as he is on the field he is a very likeable person off it and while he makes an Australian's hair bristle when you compete against him, he is the sort of player we like to see doing well."

"I have phoned all the players during the past few days and they are all highly motivated," he said.

"It is always a pity if the captain is absent, but we have won other games without him and there are other players who can show leadership."

One factor in Germany's favour is the majority of the squad have had a two week break to recover from bumps and bruises, so only goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand and striker Mario Gomez, who played for Stuttgart in last weekend's German Cup final, have had little time to rest.

Another PEC

FROM PAGE 17
Shaheen.

Many have already cast doubts over this kind of meeting, raising questions whether it really does anything for the betterment of the team or not.

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Sharapova conquers

FROM PAGE 17

fifth game after a series of woeful shots but that stung her into action as she broke back straight away in the next game to level at 3-3.

Soft served for the set at 6-5 but again that brought the best out of Sharapova as she hit back strongly to force a tie-break which she promptly won 7/4.

"It will be the toughest thing for me to go out there and win this tournament but I am willing to do it. This is also my preparation for Wimbledon."

Kuznetsova, who is making a habit of losing finals, this year already said she was determined to adopt a more positive frame of mind.

"I think I should have won many of those four finals and I didn't - it was a little bit from the mental side," she said.

"But I think I have changed and

Series in doubt for Flintoff

AFP, London

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff could miss the rest of the series against the West Indies after being told he needs surgery on his troublesome left ankle.

Flintoff had hoped to prove his fitness for the third Test against West Indies next week after being forced to miss the opening two games of the series.

However after a practice session in the nets which left him feeling soreness the 29-year-old was advised he needed to have an exploratory arthroscopy on his left ankle.

England Cricket Board medical officer Dr Nick Pierce said: "Andrew Flintoff has undergone rigorous fitness testing over the past two days, most recently 30 minutes of net bowling on Tuesday, but has reacted to the testing with further discomfort in his left ankle."

"Despite intense conservative treatment and rehabilitation with England and Lancashire's medical teams, Andrew's ankle has continued to cause him discomfort when bowling at full capacity."

"As a consequence he will undergo an exploratory arthroscopy on his left ankle over the weekend."

England will learn more about the length of time Flintoff will be sidelined after the operation.

Flintoff has twice had surgery for unrelated problems on the same left ankle in the past three years.

Flintoff said: "Obviously I'm bitterly disappointed to face another operation on my ankle as I really thought I was making progress with the injury over the past few weeks."

"I've been working really hard on my game and the rest and rehabilitation appeared to be helping the ankle but after giving it a strong workout this week, it now seems that an operation is the only option."

BCCI-Zee fallout

AFP, New Delhi

India's one-day series with South Africa in Ireland next month is in doubt following the cancellation of a deal between the Indian cricket board and the broadcast rights holder, a report said Wednesday.

Private broadcaster Zee Television pulled out of the five-year deal they signed with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to televise matches involving India at neutral venues, the Press Trust of India news agency said.

The BCCI had signed the deal with Zee after promising to play at least 25 matches in a year at neutral venues, including the three-match series in Belfast from June 26 to July 1.

"We have decided to scrap the deal," the news agency quoted top Zee official Ashish Kaul as saying.

Wish he was

FROM PAGE 17

Pietersen's case for an England Test place was championed by another Australian in Shane Warne, his captain at Hampshire, and Langer, who in 105 Tests scored 7,696 runs at an average of 45.27, said Pietersen deserved all the accolades coming his way.

"I am pleased to see him enjoying his success because not only is he entertaining to watch but I have always found young man, who has an enormous thirst for knowledge of how he can become the best player in the world."

"As confident as he is on the field he is a very likeable person off it and while he makes an Australian's hair bristle when you compete against him, he is the sort of player we like to see doing well."

"I have phoned all the players during the past few days and they are all highly motivated," he said.

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One factor in Germany's favour is the majority of the squad have had a two week break to recover from bumps and bruises, so only goalkeeper Timo Hildebrand and striker Mario Gomez, who played for Stuttgart in last weekend's German Cup final, have had little time to rest.

Another factor is that the German team has been playing a lot of friendlies and tournaments, which has helped them stay in shape.

"I think we are in a good position to qualify for the World Cup," said Pietersen.

Players want foreigner

AFP, Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

up for renewal, he was publicly backed by Tendulkar and Ganguly. And in 2005, when there was a clamour for a homegrown coach, the job went to Greg Chappell, whose candidature was supported by, ironically, Ganguly.

This time too, the opinions are divided. Though Dav Whatmore, with whom some of the BCCI officials have had informal talks, has emerged as a strong candidate, the final decision is yet to be taken. And lobbying for an Indian coach has begun, with Gavaskar and Kapil Dev leading the way.

Kapil, who is director of the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore, has already made his preferences clear by appointing Rajinder Goel, Sarkar Talwar and Rajinder Pal, to instruct the trainees.

Interestingly, while the focus has been solely on Whatmore, the name of Graham Ford has suddenly begun to do the rounds as a contender. Ford, who prefers to be low-key, had successful stints with South Africa, Natal and Kent, and could be a good man for the job. However, it is unclear whether the board has even got in touch with Ford to check on his availability or interest. From all indications the board is waiting till the meeting in Bangalore on June 4, set to begin sometime in the evening, to make its moves.

Classy Blewett retires

AFP, Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

hooks and pulls. There were a few too many unfulfilled starts from Blewett, but he certainly got it right at Johannesburg in 1996-97, when he and Steve Waugh together added 385.

It was the second-highest fifth-wicket partnership ever in Tests, falling just short of Don Bradman and Sid Barnes' 405-run effort.

Blewett and Waugh batted right through the third day, which was the first time any pair had

achieved the feat against South Africa. Blewett finished with 214, which was