

## LOCAL SNIPPETS

## SPORTS REPORTER

Discovery and Metro CA were declared joint champions as rain ruined the final of the Boost Power Cup Cricket (under-13) at the Alabaman Krira Chakra ground yesterday.

The match stopped after only eleven overs following heavy rain and all efforts to resume the game went in vain.

Former national captains Aminul Islam and Khaled Mahmud were present as special guests while Mohammad Aminul Islam Khan, secretary of National Sports Council, distributed prizes as chief guest.

## VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

Madarteck Mitali Sangha earned a 3-2 victory against Dhaka Sporting Club in the National Bank First Division Volleyball League at the outer stadium volleyball stadium.

## Munaf fully fit

PTI, Mysore

Indian team's fitness trainer Gregory King on Friday certified that speedster Munaf Patel has recovered fully from the back injury he sustained on the tour of Bangladesh and was fit for the forthcoming tour of Ireland and England.

"All the bowlers are fit for the forthcoming tour of Ireland and England. Injured bowler Munaf Patel is also fit," King told reporters on Friday after the conclusion of the four-day fitness-specific camp for bowlers held at the Infosys campus here.

The injury-prone Patel broke down during India's tour of Bangladesh last month after complaining of lower back pain and was replaced by Delhi rookie Ishant Sharma before the second Test at Chittagong.

Patel was also replaced by teammate S Sreesanth in the Asia XI team in the Twenty20 fixture against Africa XI held here on June 5 as part of the Afro-Asia Cup tournament.

The Indian team is scheduled to play three offshore ODIs at Belfast, Ireland, against South Africa and a one-off ODI against Pakistan at Glasgow, Scotland, before moving over to England for a full tour comprising three Tests and seven ODIs against the hosts.

King and left-arm pacer Rudra Pratap Singh, who addressed the media, sounded pleased over the outcome of the training camp, with bowling coach Venkatesh Prasad in charge, which commenced on June 4.

The duo was all praise for the excellent facilities available for the players at the Infosys campus.

During the camp the bowlers were taught lessons in communication skills and leadership qualities at the Infosys Leadership Institute situated inside the campus.

The bowlers trained by jogging, swimming and working out at the state-of-the-art gyms.

## 'Crazy' times for Justine

AFP, Paris

Known for her steely determination and unflappability on court, Justine Henin insists that there is another, more "crazy" side to her character.

Speaking on Friday, the day before her fourth French Open final in five years against Ana Ivanovic, Henin was happy to give a brief insight into what she is like away from the courts.

"Even if I look serious, I can be a crazy person," she said.

"I have a lot of humour and I talk a lot. I love to be with good people around me and I need to share everything.

"I am pretty serious in my job, but I can be very funny, maybe not in a press conference because I'm still in a professional attitude.

"But I can make the differences between my professional life and my private life. And I'm a very different person."

Henin knows that a win on Saturday will elevate her at just 25-years-old in the annals of French Open history.

She would be just the fourth woman in the history of the tournament to win three in a row after American Helen Wills Moody (1928-30), German Hilde Sperling (1935-37) and Serbian-turned American Monica Seles (1990-92).

And she would join Wills-Moody (four wins), Margaret Court (five), Steffi Graf (six) and Chris Evert (seven) among the ranks of women who have won at least four times at Roland Garros.

But Henin insists that at the moment making history is the furthest thing from her mind.

"It's going to be 50-50 tomorrow because it's a Grand Slam final and anything can happen," she said.

"Everyone is waiting for me, but I just have to forget about that and just be ready and try and play my best tennis."

"If I win the third one in a row, that would be a great achievement.

"But right now, it's not my main goal. I'm focussed on winning the title and that's it."



PHOTO: STAR

Players of Metro Cricket Academy and Discovery pose with the Boost Power Cup under-13 cricket competition winners' trophies after the final between the two sides was abandoned due to rain at the Kalabagan Krira Chakra ground yesterday.

## From pool to Paris

AFP, Paris



Ana Ivanovic's dramatic journey to the French Open final began with a TV advert, was nurtured in a swimming pool and survived

many people using it anyway so they emptied the water, put a carpet on the floor and put in two tennis courts," recalled Ivanovic.

"It was impossible to play crosscourt because the wall was too close. All we could do was play down the lines."

But Ivanovic, with the encouragement of her lawyer mother Dragana and father Miroslav, an economist, wasn't deterred by the chronic lack of facilities.

Things would improve in the summer when she could play outside, combining six hours of school with two hours of tennis every day of the week.

"I was always very active when I was a kid," she said. "I never played with dolls."

However, in 1999, her world was turned upside.

The west lost patience with Slobodan Milosevic's regime, and its ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, and Belgrade burned beneath a firestorm of NATO bombs.

"It was tough," said Ivanovic who was just 11 at the time of the eight-week bombing campaign.

"I thought it would be impossible to continue as we didn't know how long it would go on. We had troubles travelling because it was hard to get visas.

"There were no flights from

Serbia. We had to go to Hungary, so we'd take a bus for six, seven hours just to catch a flight."

Times were hard but the youngster's potential was spotted by Swiss businessman Dan Holzmann who invested 300,000 euros in her career when she was just 14 and took over as her manager.

She switched her base to Basel, where she now lives, and despite the problems of her early Balkan years, she hasn't looked back rising to seven in the world and winning her first title in Berlin last month.

Ivanovic's courageous and single-minded rise into the big time won applause from Maria Sharapova whom she swept aside 6-2, 6-1 in a brutally one-sided semifinal on Thursday.

The former world number one endured her own epic journey to fame and fortune, leaving her mother and Russian home at the age of six to carve out what has become the most high-profile and lucrative career in women's sport.

"My family did everything to make my dream happen," said Sharapova.

"All these young girls who were brought up that way and didn't have everything in their hands and having to work for everything.

"It's very inspiring."

## Bordeaux get a Blanc cheque

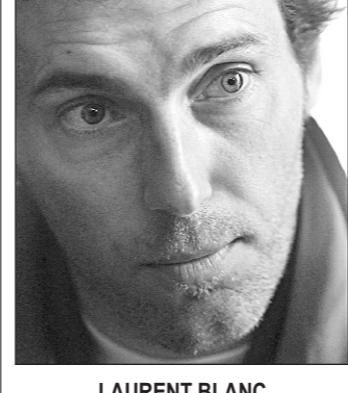
AFP, Bordeaux

World Cup winning defender Laurent Blanc became a coach for the first time on Friday when he took over at League Cup winners Bordeaux.

The 41-year-old signed a two-year contract and replaces Brazilian Ricardo, who left the club to take over league rivals Monaco.

"I want to be a coach who takes this squad to another level," commented Blanc, who did not play in the 1998 World Cup final after being controversially sent-off in the semifinal win over Croatia.

"I want to try and retain all the



LAURENT BLANC

good players at the club if possible."

Blanc, who was capped 97 times and also won the Euro 2008 title and numbered Napoli, Barcelona, Marseille and Manchester United among his clubs, said that he had started to become frustrated at not being a coach.

"I had the diplomas but every time I came to be interviewed by clubs the sticking point was my lack of experience at coaching," said Blanc, who provided one of the most notable habitual moments of the 1998 World Cup in kissing the bald plate of goalkeeper Fabien Barthez as a lucky omen.

"They were right but at the same time it was starting to irritate me."

Blanc said that two managers he had served under had made the biggest impression on him and he would take the lessons he learnt from them into his job.

"For me, the ideal coach is the one who gets the best out of his players," said Blanc.

"And if he can do that and also extricate the team from the bad moments in a season then that is even better."

"I know of coaches with these qualities, especially two, Marcello Lippi (who coached him at Inter Milan) and Sir Alex Ferguson (who he played under at Manchester United)."

"The two of them may not have been the types to be there all week on the training ground, but on the day and eve of the match they took things in hand and spoke to you individually and with the squad in its entirety."

## Flintoff

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getting back on the field.

"I've just had an operation on my ankle, I've got a rehab programme in front of me. All my focus and all my energy have got to go into that because I desperately want to get out on the cricket field."

The hard-hitting batsman and fast bowler said: "The way I play and the way I bowl, I've got to be 100 percent fit. I want to get back to bowling late 80-90mph and to do that I need a fit ankle."

Flintoff's ability to bowl at top pace in international cricket has now been questioned but he said: "I have had ankle operations in the past and come back from them and hopefully I can do again."

"It's frustrating I'm not playing but I'm confident I can and I have the utmost faith in the medical staff."

## Signs point to Ford

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and expressed his keenness and enthusiasm to take up the India job, Ford has done nothing to canvass for the position. If anything, Ford is already comfortably employed by Kent, and has the security of a contract that runs till 2008 to fall back on.

For Ford not to get the job now, one of two things must happen. The first is that he makes an unimpressive presentation that he rules himself out of contention. That seems unlikely given that he is a professional in the modern coaching arena and has a working knowledge of how to put his case forward.

The second scenario where Ford could not get the job is where the Board of Control for Cricket in India makes him an offer so poor that it does not tempt him to leave Kent. While monetary concerns form one part, the major issue deals with the constant travel, the high-pressure,

disbelief, referring to John Inverarity, who is consultant with the county, when asked about Emburey.

It seems like an unfair thing to say to a man who has played 64 Tests, taking 147 wickets and scoring more than 1700 runs at over 20, but when it comes to coaching credentials, Emburey has nothing on the man who never played Tests and only averaged 13.5 from 7 first-class games. Till recently, when you Googled for "Graham Ford", the first thing you got was "Columbus Ford Dealer of Ohio State with a great selection of new and used cars, trucks, hybrid escape, mustang and SUV vehicles," and nothing relevant to cricket on the first page. All that is set to change, unless of course, Ford puts a higher price on his anonymity than on the most challenging, and potentially rewarding, job in cricket coaching.

What makes Ford's position so strong is that his competitor has done little of note in his second innings in cricket. With no disrespect to Emburey, who was a restrictive and canny offspinner and a lower-order batsman that opposition teams worried about, his coaching record is something Ford will lose no sleep over. Emburey's stints with Northamptonshire and Middlesex have been such unqualified disasters that no one in the know believes he could land the India job off his own bat. "Embers? Are you sure you have the right John? It's probably Invers you want," said one Middlesex player in

## Harmison strikes

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major factor in a high extras total of 47.

## SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea on the second day of the third Test between England and the West Indies at Old Trafford on Friday:

ENGLAND: First innings (overnight 296-7)

Strauss lbw b Taylor 6

Cook c Bravo b Sammy 60

Vaughan b Collymore 41

Pietersen c Bravo b Collymore 9

Collingwood lbw b Taylor 10

Bell c Ramdin b Collymore 97

Prior c Morton b Bravo 40

Plunkett lbw b Edwards 13

Harmison c Ramdin b Edwards 18

Sidebottom lbw b Edwards 15

Panesar not out 14

Extras: (b-15, lb-8, w-6, nb-2) 35

Total: (All out 105.1 overs) 370

Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-49, 3-116.

WICKETS: 1-13, 2-117, 3-132, 4-132, 5-166, 6-264, 7-285, 8-324, 9-338, 10-370.

ENGLAND: Second innings (150-2)

Smith not out 40

Morton c Strauss b Harmison 35

Chanderpaul not out 15

Extras: (b-16, lb-8, w-9, nb-2) 35

Total: (For 3 wkt in 30 overs) 153

Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-49, 3-116.

WICKETS: 1-13, 2-117, 3-132, 4-132, 5-166, 6-264, 7-285, 8-324, 9-338, 10-370.

WEST INDIES: First innings

Gayle c Cook b Plunkett 23

Ganga lbw b Harmison 5

Federer storms

unable to serve it out, allowing the Swiss to level at 5-5.

The Russian then squandered another break point, his 13th of the tie, in the 11th game before Federer romped to a two-set lead with a confident tiebreak.

Despite the deficit, Davydenko battled on.

Three more break points went begging in the second game of the third set but he made a crucial break-through in the fourth to lead 3-1.

However, the occasion got the better of him again when he wasted two set points on his own service in the ninth game, which handed Federer another lifeline.

Jacques Kallis will lead South Africa during their one-day tour in Ireland, which includes an ODI against the hosts and three against India in Storm