

Benoit, family found dead

AP, Fayetteville

WWE wrestler Chris Benoit, his wife and son were found dead Monday and police said they were investigating the deaths as a homicide.

Lt. Tommy Pope of the Fayette County Sheriff's Department said the three were found at their home about 2:30 p.m., but refused to release details.

Pope said results of autopsies on Benoit, his wife Nancy, and 7-year-old son Daniel were expected Tuesday.

Benoit, 40, was a former world heavyweight champion, Intercontinental champion and held several tag-team titles over his career.

"WWE extends its sincerest thoughts and prayers to the Benoit family's relatives and loved ones in this time of tragedy," the federation said in a statement on its Web site.

Benoit was scheduled to perform at the "Vengeance" pay-per-view event Sunday night in Houston, but was replaced at the last minute because of what announcer Jim Ross called "personal reasons."

Benoit, a Canadian native, maintained a home in metro Atlanta from the time he wrestled for the defunct World Championship Wrestling.

The WWE cancelled its live "Monday Night RAW" card in Corpus Christi, Texas.



PHOTO: STAR

Pakistan World Cup winner Aaquib Javed imparts some tips on the front arm movement of a fast bowler to the final round qualifiers of the GrameenPhone Pacer Hunt programme at the BKSP in Savar yesterday.

Aaquib suggests changes

Cricket

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting Pakistan National Cricket Academy coach Aaquib Javed yesterday opined that club cricket structure in Bangladesh should be changed to create quality fast bowlers.

"To have better fast bowlers, Bangladesh needs to change its club cricket structure a little bit," the former Pakistan speedster told at a press conference at BKSP in Savar.

Aaquib, who arrived in Dhaka on Monday, is offering specialised coaching to selected pace bowlers at the ongoing GrameenPhone Pacer Hunt Camp (phase-3).

During a break in the day's camp, the 1992 World Cup winner admitted that club cricket in Bangladesh is very competitive but he felt that matches are played on dead pitches.

Aaquib said Pakistan produces pacers in numbers because 90 per cent matches are played on seamng pitches.

He also emphasised on producing fast bowlers and good leg spinners for success at international level.

He suggested introducing foreign fast bowlers in first class cricket, saying: "The local fast bowlers would also be able to learn from them."

"My aim here is to improve the bowlers' speed whatever they are having at the moment because to swing the ball is not a big deal but to bowl fast is very difficult."

Asked whether he was happy with the action of the local youngsters, he said, "I am not fully happy. Nobody is perfect and it varies from person to person."

Former Bangladesh skipper and now National Cricket Academy operations manager Khaled Mahmud, national cricket academy coaches Dipu Roy Chowdhury and Golam Faruque Suru, AGM (head of market communications) of GrameenPhone Mir Nawab Ali were also present at the press conference.

"We've been associated with the development of Bangladesh

cricket and we will try to engage us with spinner and wicketkeeper hunt programmes in the future if the board wants," said Nawab Ali.

Salahuddin Mohammad, a pacer from Satkhira, generating the highest speed of 83 kph in the camp said he has been benefited by the advice of Aaquib.

Tevez prefers

FROM PAGE 20

reiterated that Real are "waiting with arms open" for the Brazilian but if he decides to stay put, the Spanish giants could turn their attentions elsewhere and will likely step up their interest in Tevez.

Di Michele

FROM PAGE 20

also been charged with an involvement in the betting scandal.

It has long been forbidden for any player in Italy to bet on matches in their own championship, but in 2005 the FIGC extended that ban to include any form of gambling.

Enough.

Yuvraj on a roll usually translates to India on a roll. In the 34 games where he's made at least 50, India have won 26. Between November 9, 2005 and May 26, 2006, when India recored a record number of wins, Yuvraj was king. He averaged 70.5 in 22 innings during that period, rattling three centuries and seven fifties. Seventeen of those innings were from No.4 and 5 and he was one of the few batsmen who wasn't shuffled up and down the order in the period of "experimentation".

The flip side, though, was that 17 of those innings were in the sub-continent and one continued to wait for that definitive season when he would dazzle abroad as well.

He cracked two consecutive fifties in India's tour to the Caribbean last year, reeling off 93 and 52, but there was little of note on the long tour. It was the start of a start-stop phase that proved, in the words of Sukhwinder Bawa, Yuvraj's long-time coach, "one of the most frustrating periods". Injury dogged him in the Caribbean, a poor series followed at Kuala Lumpur, before a knee injury sustained during a session of kho-kho, on the eve of Champions Trophy clash against Australia, put him out of action for three months. "He watched a lot of India's cricket on television and itched to get back. He didn't want to miss the World Cup at any cost. It's that desire which made him recover quickly. It was a serious injury but he's come through well."

He's been in the news for his off-field remarks too. He veered to an extreme on the Greg Chappell issue, even being warned by the

board for making comments to the media. Chappell himself hadn't endeared himself to him by telling a journalist: "The problem with Yuvraj is that he believes he is a star when he is only a rising one".

Soon Dhoni, a relative newbie for the vice-captain's slot, upstaged him. "The vice-captaincy choice is strange," says Bawa, "but that won't deter Yuvraj. I've always said he has the potential to be India's future captain and I still think that's very likely. I once said he would captain India in the 2011 World Cup and maintained that even now."

Yuvraj is yet to seal his Test spot - some feel he isn't Test material, others think he just hasn't got too many chances at that level - but it's the one-day arena where he must fly. India have struggled with a finisher, someone who can up the rate or steer a chase and it's him, along with Dhoni, who needs to stay in there and finish the job. If he needs a sounding board, there's always Robin Singh, the current fielding coach, who could nudge or biff, as the situation demanded, and that wonderfully maximised his limited ability.

Extended success in Ireland, England, Australia and home will confirm that Yuvraj is indeed the flagbearer for the next crop of batsmen, a batch that needs to blossom fast if India wish to be ready for the impending departure of a golden generation.

And then there's Yuvraj Singh. He can't be termed a youngster anymore, seven years of experience takes away that luxury, neither can he be termed 'great', not as yet, not by a long way. He's not struggling for a place but he's not carrying the baton either. He's shown what he's capable of, finishing off matches with ferocity, but he's often infuriated by not doing it consistently

enough.

The state of disarray within the Caribbean game had previously been exposed when West Indies had to call-up five players from English league clubs and universities to make up the numbers against England A at Worcester after three of their 14-man one-day squad arrived too late for the game.

Rows between the board and the West Indies Players' Association have become commonplace in recent years.

An arbitration panel last week found for the fifth time in as many hearings in favour of the players. They ruled the England tour fell outside the International Cricket Council's Future Tours Programme and therefore the players were entitled to additional payments.

The promise waits

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Three one-dayers against South Africa at Belfast, a one-off against Pakistan at Glasgow, seven against England at the end of the summer, seven against Australia, five against Pakistan (both at home) and a tri-series, in Australia, involving the hosts and World Cup finalists, Sri Lanka. India's one-day roster is a most challenging one and unless their batsmen step up to the plate, which they couldn't do for most of last season, there would be plenty of heartbreak.

India's batting line-up currently sports distinct shades. There's Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid at one end of the spectrum, batsmen already assured of greatness and trying to finish their careers on a high; there are others, like Dinesh Karthik and Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who've shown tremendous potential and trying to kick on; there are youngsters, like Robin Uthappa and Rohit Sharma, finding their way; and there's Gautam Gambhir trying to prove that he can cut the mustard at the international level after all.

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He added: "We didn't have a fight or anything in the room. We both respect each other. The relationship I have with Arsene will always remain, whatever happens" said Henry, before earning early credit with the local media by stating his happiness at his new surroundings in the local tongue.

With Arsenal's all-time leading scorer on board, Barcelona will look to avenge last season's Liga loss to arch-rivals Real Madrid, which left the club empty-handed.

The morning medical presented no problems, club doctor Richard

Russel win opener

SPORTS REPORTER

Sheikh Russel Krira Chakra got off to an auspicious start in the AB Bank Senior Division Table Tennis super league yesterday when the holders routed Wari 3-0 at the Woodenfloor Gymnasium.

Russel, who began the 5-team championship leg behind Biman, did not drop a single set as Mostafa blanked Shahed 3-0 while Mahbub and Kachi beat Rokin and Baban respectively by identical margins.

In women's league, defending champions Abahani defeated Armenian Girls in straight sets while Biman and Bangladesh Chemical and Perfumery Society also won in straight sets against Lalbagh TTA and Moller TTC.

But then the phrase "most professional cricketers" does not include Kevin Peter Pietersen, who has instead used a rare day off to promote Kevin Pietersen.

Well that's perhaps a little bit unfair. He has actually signed up to a couple of public relations "opportunities" in central London.

The second engagement takes place in Soho, at a nightclub called Punk.

It is slightly unnerving to be served weird-coloured drinks by girls in white hot pants at 3pm on a weekday.

But this is how these places operate -- and if the tabloids are to be believed, KP would know a thing or two about West End nightspots.

In the early stages of the West Indies tour, he took his great mate Chris Gayle, plus Ramnaresh Sarwan and Runku Morton, out to dinner not far from here.

"They are very, very nice guys," he tells BBC Sport at the launch of Kevin Pietersen Pro Cricket 2007.

"I get on really well with them. Chris is a good friend of mine. I've

KP raring to go

Cricket

BBC ONLINE, undated

After 11 days of cricket in barely two weeks, most professional cricketers would be desperate for a day at home doing something nondescript.

Perhaps a gentle drive with the missus to a country pub, a few holes of golf or reclining on the living-room sofa with a cup of tea and a magazine might suffice.

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"I get on really well with them. Chris is a good friend of mine. I've

known him for two years and we keep in touch.

"You play the sport to make friends, to enjoy yourself. It's a very important part of the game."

Pietersen dismisses the suggestion of discord within the Windies camp and is hoping for some exciting cricket in the one-day internationals against them.

"I've played against them twice.

Both times we chased down 300, once in Ahmedabad and once in

Bangalore.

"They were great exciting games, so hopefully we can get some really good games in the next couple of weeks which people deserve."

West Indies generally provided meek opposition in the Tests, but if Gayle can start middling a few more of his expansive drives -- it might be a different story in the shorter game.

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