



Action from yesterday's Araf Apparels 21st National Youth Hockey Championship match between BKSP and Rajshahi at the Maulana Bhasani National Stadium.

Malik finds his slot

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan finally woke up but it's still likely to be too late. Spirited they were through the third day, but it felt a defeated spirit, at best a statement perhaps ahead of the second Test that South Africa will not have it so easy again.

For much of this match Pakistan have looked jammed in a previous era, not a team moving into another. Twice as many spinners as fast bowlers seemed a new way of doing things, though possibly not the best. But even Mohammad Asif and Umar Gul have rarely looked so defeated by a surface. The spinners were supposed to have feasted like kings on this pitch, but have instead respected the holy month, until today.

In the bigger picture, Shoaib Malik scrapping away this afternoon was no bad thing. The uncertainty over his promotion to the captaincy revolved more around the timing, not so much the potential. In 18 Tests, he hadn't fully nailed down his place in the middle-order: two of his six fifties and

his only Test century have come while opening, so where, if at all, is he best utilised?

There's no if now, for he is leader and on the evidence of today, the middle-order isn't a bad area for him to be in. For one, if conditions are right, there isn't a kind of innings he seems incapable of playing. His only Test century was an eight-hour match-saving one, and unlike his top order, he made the switch from 20 overs to five days without breaking sweat. Solid defence mixed calmly and eagerly with the odd bill, broken up occasionally by a thoroughly correct drive or clip.

The only blemish came in his demise, an ugly, dancing swipe about as necessary as a hole in the head. The situation at the time means that will attract unhealthy attention; a century in his first Test as captain would've been some statement, but a calming 73 isn't a bad way to start.

For all Pakistan's spunk today, however, South Africa have bossed this from the start. Makhaya Ntini apart, they have felt more tangibly up for it everywhere, in the field, with the bat, with the ball. Andre Nel has been the best fast bowler on

view, charging in as a bull might to red cloth, twiddling his action, his pace and lengths but never his commitment. It is the way Nel is and so doesn't come as a surprise. Paul Harris, on the other hand, looked the most threatening spinner, which did come as a surprise.

He sparked Pakistan's slide yesterday and completed it today, in the process completing his first five-wicket haul. If you thought a South African spinner taking a five-for was rare - the last time that happened was three years ago - when was the last time a South African spinner took the new ball, as Harris did today?

Mark Boucher, beneficiary with two rare stumpings, reckons Harris is one of the best spinners he has kept to. "He's tall, very tall and he gets good bounce. He puts it in consistent areas and is good at building up the pressure."

There is likely more to come from the man who cites top Australian surfer Kelly Slater as his idol ("I can't really think of any left-arm spinners as role models") and didn't become the fast bowler his height deemed him fit for because "there are no fast-twitch muscles in

this body so I switched to spin."

He's not exactly an overnight star, for he has been around on the domestic circuit for almost a decade. The season before last, he was the highest wicket-taker domestically. His lack of multi-dimensionality and surfer ways doesn't really fit in with the South African way and he was almost lost to Kolpak.

But he's hung around, and with some help from Richard Pybus, it's paying off. "Richard really turned my career around. Mentally especially he was very good for me. I've been lucky to play on some good pitches so far and any spinner would love to bowl on this pitch."

Though South Africa stuttered late-against some improved spin bowling, the lead is already imposing at 235. Boucher reckons anywhere between 320 and 350 is the target. "Our 159-run lead [first innings] is golden at the moment," he said, "because batting is going to be tough from now on. Another hundred runs or so and a 320 lead will be very competitive."

With Harris already itching to bowl on the fourth and fifth days, it is likely to be more than just that.

He said, "I want to play as long as I am fit and can perform."

Inzamam needs just 20 runs to beat Javed Miandad's Pakistan Test record of 8,832 runs.

"I have informed the selectors that I am available to play the Lahore Test and now it's up to them to select me or not," said Inzamam, who played for the English county Yorkshire on a short-term basis last month.

Meanwhile Inzamam said that since he hoped he would play in the second Test there is little chance he will go to London to attend a hearing as a witness in umpire Darrell Hair's race discrimination case.

Hair has sued his employers, the International Cricket Council, for allegedly banning him from standing in a Test or one day international since the Oval Test controversy in August 2006.

"I have informed the tribunal about my not coming to London as I may be busy playing the Test," he said.

Steyn 13.3 2 50 2

Ntini 11 2 48 0

Harris 36 13 73 5

Nel 20 4 59 2

Kallis 11 3 21 1

Smith 6 1 18 0

SOUTH AFRICA: Second innings

Smith c Akmal b Rehman 25

Gibbs c Iqbal b Kaneria 18

Amla st Akmal b Rehman 10

Kallis not out 18

Prince not out 11

Extras: (b-4) 4

Total: (For three wickets in 32 overs) 76

To bat: De Villiers, Boucher, Nel, Harris, Steyn, Ntini.

Fall of wickets: 1-41, 2-43, 3-43.

Bowler O M R W

Asif 6 1 14 0

Gul 5 1 15 0

Rehman 11 3 25 2

Kaneria 10 1 18 1

Umpires: Mark Benson (ENG) and Simon Taufel (AUS)

TV umpire: Riazuddin

Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)

'Hair trying to blackmail ICC'

AFP, London

Australian cricket umpire Darrell Hair tried to "blackmail" the International Cricket Council (ICC) into paying him off through "sheer mudslinging", an employment tribunal heard on Wednesday.

ICC lawyer Michael Beloff accused Hair of trying to pressurize the body into paying him off by threatening to go public with allegations of racism, in the wake of a controversial decision against Pakistan at the Oval last year.

Hair was one of two umpires officiating in the fourth and final Test between England and Pakistan at The Oval who awarded England five penalty runs because they believed Pakistan had illegally tampered with the ball.

Pakistan were incensed by the decision and refused to return to the pitch after the tea interval. The match was eventually awarded to England, who took the series 3-0.

Hair is suing the ICC for alleged racial discrimination because he says that, while he has not been allowed to officiate in Test matches since, his co-umpire Billy Doctrove, a West Indian, has escaped censure.

But Beloff accused him of "sheer mudslinging".

"What you were hoping to do was cause the ICC maximum embarrassment and cajole them into making some sort of offer to you," claimed Beloff.

Beloff noted emails which Hair sent in the aftermath of the Oval Test, in which first he offered to resign for a one-off payment of 500,000 US dollars (350,000 euros), then revised the offer after speculation about possible racism allegations.

"I suggest that this is an example of you saying 'if you don't accept the offer, I am going to make all sorts of allegations around the racism issue.' It was blackmail, wasn't it?" he said.

Hair said it was not blackmail, but admitted that he regretted having sent the emails.

Beloff also described as a "scurrilous smear" allegations by Hair that Pakistan Cricket Board head Nasim Ashraf had reputedly been involved in financial irregularities.

Gazirchot and Muslim win

SPORTS REPORTER

Muslim Institute blanked PWD 2-0 in the Third Division Football Super League at the Bir Shreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in Kamalapur yesterday.

After a scoreless first half Mizanur put the winners ahead in the 66th minute while Priyotosh sealed the victory 13 minutes later.

In the day's other match, a brace by Pashban helped Gazirchot SC come from behind and beat Friends Social Welfare Organisation 2-1.

Chowmin shot Friends ahead on the half hour but Pashban struck twice within ten minutes of the second half for Gazirchot.

Shane denies Jemima link

AFP, Sydney

It was the story the cricketing world found too good to be true -- retired Australian leg-spinner Shane Warne was romancing Jemima Khan, the former wife of Pakistan cricket legend Imran Khan.

And it was just that.

In a front-page story on the cover of Woman's Day magazine, Khan was named as the "other woman" in Warne's life and the cause of the latest split from his ex-wife Simone Callahan.

But Warne, embroiled in a messy public tit-for-tat exchange with Callahan over alleged infidelities, Wednesday dismissed the story as nonsense, saying he was "just friends" with the glamorous Khan.

"There's absolutely no truth in that one whatsoever," he said in Melbourne.

"We're good friends, friends with the family and that's it. Hopefully that all clears it up with you guys."

Warne retired from international cricket this year and moved to England where he attempted to reconcile with Callahan, whom he divorced in 2005.

But the pair now say they have parted for good, with Callahan recently claiming in a paid magazine interview that the relationship ended after Warne accidentally sent her a cheeky text message intended for another woman.

Warne has denied her account but Wednesday said he would not engage in a public feud with the mother of his three children.

"I'm not going to start a tennis match with Simone, backwards and forwards," he said. "Simone knows the truth, that's the end of that one."

Sreesanth angers media

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

India's media Wednesday condemned fast bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth's on-field tantrums after he clashed with Australian batsmen, saying there was a "thin line between aggression and antics."

Sreesanth clashed repeatedly with the batsmen during Tuesday's second one-day international in Kochi and even appealed for a run-out against Andrew Symonds after the ball was ruled dead.

The bowler ran up to striker Brad Haddin's feet to collect a ball that bounced off the batsman's pad and eye-balled him inches from his nose.

Non-striker Symonds left his crease to have a word with Sreesanth who promptly dislodged the balls and continued to appeal for a run-out even though umpire Suresh Shastri ruled it a "dead" ball.

Indian captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni prevented the situation from turning ugly by persuading Sreesanth to get on with the game, but the local media was unimpressed.

"Sreesanth's on-field behaviour made little sense," wrote the Hindu newspaper.

"There was little excuse for Sreesanth's exaggerated and pro-

vocative celebration when he, subsequently, had Symonds caught and bowled.

"He has (in the past) had his match-fees docked, been spoken to by umpires, but he does not seem to have learnt his lesson."

"He is so much the better pacer when his mind and body are in harmony. Once Sreesanth loses his cool, he is not the same force as a bowler."



SHANTHAKUMARAN SREESANTH

Sreesanth has been fined a few times in the past year, the latest for excessive appealing during the semifinal win over Australia at last month's Twenty20 world championships in South Africa.

Australia's stand-in captain Adam Gilchrist, celebrating his team's 84-run victory, said he was shocked by the aggressive on-field

behaviour of some players.

"I saw some really hard-fought cricket," said Gilchrist. "There were some comments between different players and that happens."

"I also saw a few things that I would not expect from my son, Harrison, in a backyard game of cricket."

"Sreesanth was quite outspoken about how he was going to take the challenge to us. He's said a lot in the press, and we see it. That's fine. We're not questioning that."

"That's no doubt the way he wants to play cricket. When we get our chance, we will play aggressive cricket too."

Haddin, who was named man of the match for his 69-ball 87, was less diplomatic.

"There is a fine line between stupidity and the spirit of cricket," Haddin said, referring to Sreesanth's run-out appeal against Symonds.

"You can judge for yourself." The Indian captain chose to play down his fast bowler's behaviour.

"Sreesanth was heated up but he has changed over the last six months," Dhoni said. "He was playing in front of his home crowd and got excited."

With the first match in Bangalore abandoned due to rain, Australia lead 1-0 in what has effectively become a six-match series.

The next match will be played in Hyderabad on Friday.

Venus, Sania move on

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Top seed Venus Williams barely worked up a sweat while India's Sania Mirza struggled, but both women booked their spots Wednesday in the quarter-finals of the Japan Open.

In the men's draw, top seed David Ferrer -- looking to secure his spot in the season-ending Masters Cup in Shanghai -- ousted 2005 Japan Open champion Wesley Moodie of South Africa, 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, moving on to the third round.

Williams, the reigning Wimbledon champion and world number eight, had no trouble with fellow American Vania King, cruising to a 6-0, 6-4 victory.

But the second-seeded Mirza twice had to fight back from a service break down in the final set against Casey Dellacqua of Australia before prevailing 6-4, 3-6,

6-4.

The Indian star, ranked 29th in the world, said experience proved the difference when it counted, keeping her cool despite losing her serve in the first and fifth games of the decider before seizing the momentum.

Spain's Ferrer, the world number eight enjoying his best-ever season on the ATP Tour, said he struggled in the first set -- and perhaps got lucky in the second.

"In the first set, I had many chances on very big points, but I couldn't take them," he said after the 92-minute match.

"Maybe in the second set, I played not better than I did in the first set, but I won it 6-2, because he had break points and he couldn't take those chances. That made the difference."

A win for Ferrer here could boost his chances of securing a spot in the eight-man season-ending tournament in November. He is currently sixth on the list in the race

to Shanghai. In the first round in 2002.

Other top players in the men's draw -- second seed Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic, third seed Richard Gasquet of France, and fourth seed Lleyton Hewitt of Australia joined Ferrer in the third round.

Berdych downed compatriot Ili Vanek 6-1, 6-4, while Gasquet breezed past American Zack Fleishman and Hewitt outlasted Luka Gregorc of Slovenia, both by a score of 6-3, 6-3.

In other action, sixth seed Dmitry Tursunov of Russia, seventh seed Ivo Karlovic, 10th seed Feliciano Lopez, 12th seed Thomas Johansson of Sweden and 16th seed Michael Russell of the United States all advanced to the third round.

Frank Dancevic, the 15th seed, was upset by German veteran Rainer Schuettler 6-2, 4-6, 6-2, while American Vince Spadea ousted 14th seed Sergio Roitman 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (9/7).

Ferguson hails Rooney

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luck because we played the game with good control and good tactical awareness.

"The position in the group now is straightforward. Ten points will get us through, we have got six and winning our first two matches gives us confidence and a controlling position."

"Now we have back-to-back matches against Dynamo Kiev and hopefully we can add to those results. We don't want to be going to Rome for the last game in the group looking for points."

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti bemoaned his side's bad luck - although in reality it was dreadful finishing that cost them, Simone Perrotta and Mauro Esposito in particular missing absolute sitters in the closing stages.

"When a team puts on that kind of display, really at the end of the match they should not be on the beaten side, even against opponents of the stature of Manchester United," Spalletti complained.

"If anyone deserved to score more goals today it was us rather than Manchester."

Roma's line-up featured five survivors from their last, dispiriting visit to Old Trafford but there was no sign of psychological scarring from that painful night as they dominated for over an hour.

Their talismanic captain Francesco Totti had troubled United throughout the opening period and came close to giving his side the lead minutes after the interval, when Ludovic Giuly found him on the edge of the six-yard box with only Tomasz Kuszczak to beat.

The number ten opted to attempt a chipped finish, clearing both the sprawling goalkeeper and the bar in the process.

Even after Rooney had given them the lead, United continued to live dangerously and it took a combination of some superb blocks from Nemanja Vidic and misses from ten yards Perrotta and substitute Esposito to preserve their advantage in the final stages.

Eng to retain

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which is the exciting thing and he's a great character to have in the dressing-room as well so it's a good start for him."

But England may try to get more out of Ravi Bopara. The Essex all-rounder looked wasted at number seven in the batting order, and did not bowl an over.

With the wicket in Dambulla taking more spin than expected, Sri Lanka may ponder playing the specialist slow bowler Kausar Lokurachchi after doing without one on Monday.

Four teams get

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On October 8 at the same venue. Rajshahi will play two warm-up games against BCB National Cricket Academy on October 6 at the Shaheed Chandu Stadium in Bogra and October 7 at the Rajshahi Divisional Stadium.

Khulna is also fortunate enough to play two practice games on October 9 and 10 respectively against the Academy side at the Bir Shreshtha Shahid Murtuza Rahman Stadium in Khulna.

Mark modest

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now, and his world record is a worthy reward for his outstanding achievements as both a wicketkeeper and lower order batsman."

Boucher will have a chance to add to his tally as South Africa will hope to add quick runs in the morning and declare some time in the second session. With the ball turning sharply, and Pakistan batsmen willing to chase wide deliveries, he may even become the first wicketkeeper to break the 400-barrier.

Wenger wants

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over Manuel Almunia midway through the second half.

Stearns should have taken the lead in the 71st minute. Victorias Jacob beat Arsenal's hesitant off-side trap and bore down on Almunia, only to drag his shot woefully wide.

That miss proved decisive. Wenger's side finally pieced together an incisive attack in the 76th minute and made it count in ruthless style.

Adebayor's cross from left side of the penalty area cut out four Stearna defenders and reached van Persie, who drove a perfect shot high past Zapata.

It was van der Dutch forward's second winner in four days after his strike sealed the points at West Ham on Saturday.

The patient way Arsenal tried to wear down the Romanians pleased Wenger almost as much as the result.

Where they would often become frustrated if the game didn't go their way a year ago, now there is a new maturity to the likes of van Persie, Cesc Fabregas and Emmanuel Adebayor.

"Patience is linked with maturity and we were conscious of that at half-time," Wenger said.

"We felt superior and we were but as long as you do not score you must not become too nervous or impatient, and therefore open to the counterattack."

"We kept going, were intelligent and in the end scored the goal which gave us a deserved win."

Inzy waits on PCB

Cricket

AFP, Karachi

Pakistani cricket chiefs said Wednesday that they will make a decision on the fate of Inzamamul Haq in the next few days after the former skipper said he wanted to keep playing.

Inzamam announced his retirement from one-day internationals and resigned the Test and one-day captaincy following Pakistan's humiliating first-round exit from the World Cup in the West Indies in March.

The 37-year-old master batsman, who has scored 8,813 runs in 119 Tests, ruled himself out of the ongoing first Test against South Africa in Karachi this week without giving a reason.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Nasim Ashraf "has clearly stated that all policy deci-

sions regarding Inzamam will be announced in the next couple of days which will be in the larger interest of the game," a board statement said.

The statement denied media reports that the PCB and Inzamam have struck a deal for the former captain to get a golden handshake of around 150,000 US dollars to retire from Test cricket.

"The newspaper report that the PCB has carried out a deal with Inzamam by assuring him a guaranteed sum of 10 million rupees for his retirement from Test cricket, is absolutely incorrect," it said.

Inzamam said in an interview published in the Urdu-language Express newspaper on Wednesday that he had informed Pakistani selectors about his availability for the second Test in Lahore starting from October 8.

"I am fully fit and have no plans to retire," said Inzamam.

"I don't want to leave the game,"

Harris snares five

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runs in his 19th Test.

It was Harris who provided the breakthrough when he trapped Butt in front of the wicket, before Malik rashly stepped out of his crease to a flighted Harris delivery and was stumped by Boucher.

Malik hit six boundaries and a six during his stubborn 227-minute stay.

Gul and Kaneria added 21 runs for the ninth wicket before Harris struck again, dismissing Gul, who was stumped by Boucher for 12 to give the keeper his new milestone.

Kaneria then added another 32 runs for the last wicket with Mohammad Asif (10), before Dale Steyn wrapped up the innings by bowling Asif to finish with 2-50. Nel took 2-59.

The second Test starts in Lahore on Monday.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at close on the third

day of the first Test between Pakistan and South Africa at the National Stadium in Karachi on Wednesday:

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 450 (Kallis 155, De Villiers 77, Amla 71, Gibbs 54; Rehman 4-105)

PAKISTAN: First innings (overnight 127-5)

Hafeez