

# 'Aussies will come hard'

PTI, Vadodara

Stung by the defeat to India at Chandigarh, Australian captain Ricky Ponting is not in a mood to concede more ground and cautioned the home team that they will treat the fifth cricket one-dayer tomorrow as a virtual final.

"The last game was a terrific game of cricket and India have made it 1-2 and the series is alive. Tomorrow is a very important game for us and we would treat it as a final. You know the Australian team is at its best in such games," Ponting said at the match-eve media conference on Wednesday.

But the Australian skipper was also aware of the heat and humidity factor which can trouble the visitors at the Reliance Stadium here.

"We have practiced extra hard on Wednesday. We made sure we have lot of intakes of fluids as it's very humid out there and the temperature is around 38 (degrees Celsius)," he said.

Ponting felt that the way two big men -- Andrew Symonds and Mathew Hayden -- have imposed themselves on the bowlers with their size and power was an indication of how cricket will be played in future.

"Hayden and Symonds are imposing batsmen. Both are six-feet and go down the track to put pressure on the bowlers. With more of Twenty20 cricket coming up batsmen like me may be forced to restrict ourselves to Test cricket," he said with a smile.

# 'Change upsets'

CRICINFO, undated

The new one-day rule where the old ball is replaced for the 35th over is not making Brett Lee happy. Lee believes the change to a harder, shiny ball gives batsmen an advantage towards the end of an innings and says he is "not a massive fan" of the ICC regulation.

Previously balls were switched when they became soft and pitch-coloured, but in the current series in India one in significantly better condition has appeared. "The newer balls we've been using when they were pretty shiny and still have the Kookaburra writing on them," Lee said in the Australian. "It makes it harder for the bowlers because you're trying to work with a ball that is as old as possible and you come on at the 34th over and you're bowling with a new ball again."

Tim Nielsen, Australia's coach, has noticed a change in scoring rates after the change. "After the 34th over our run rate's escalated quite a bit," he told the paper. "We've been going on at four or five an over and it's got up to seven or eight a couple of times. The difference ball is harder and comes on to the bat better."

Lee has been tried with a soft ball during the series to see if he can get reverse-swing and he has also been employed with the replacement. "It depends on the position of the game," Nielsen said. "If you've got a new batsman you might bring on the fast bowlers. If you've got two batsmen in you might try and batten down the hatches a bit until the ball gets softer."

# Minister urges for Atapattu return

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan Sports Minister Gamini Lokuge is keen to bring back former captain Marvan Atapattu into the squad for next month's tour of Australia, a ministry official said here Wednesday.

"The minister hopes to see Marvan in the next few days to hear his side of the story. He is keen to see an end to the present row between him and the selectors," spokesman Kapila Bamunuarachchi told AFP.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) have already named their squad for the two Test matches in Australia, but the sports minister's approval is needed to make it official.

Atapattu was not immediately available for comment.

Lokuge on Tuesday met the selection panel, including chairman Asantha de Mel, to iron out the problems.

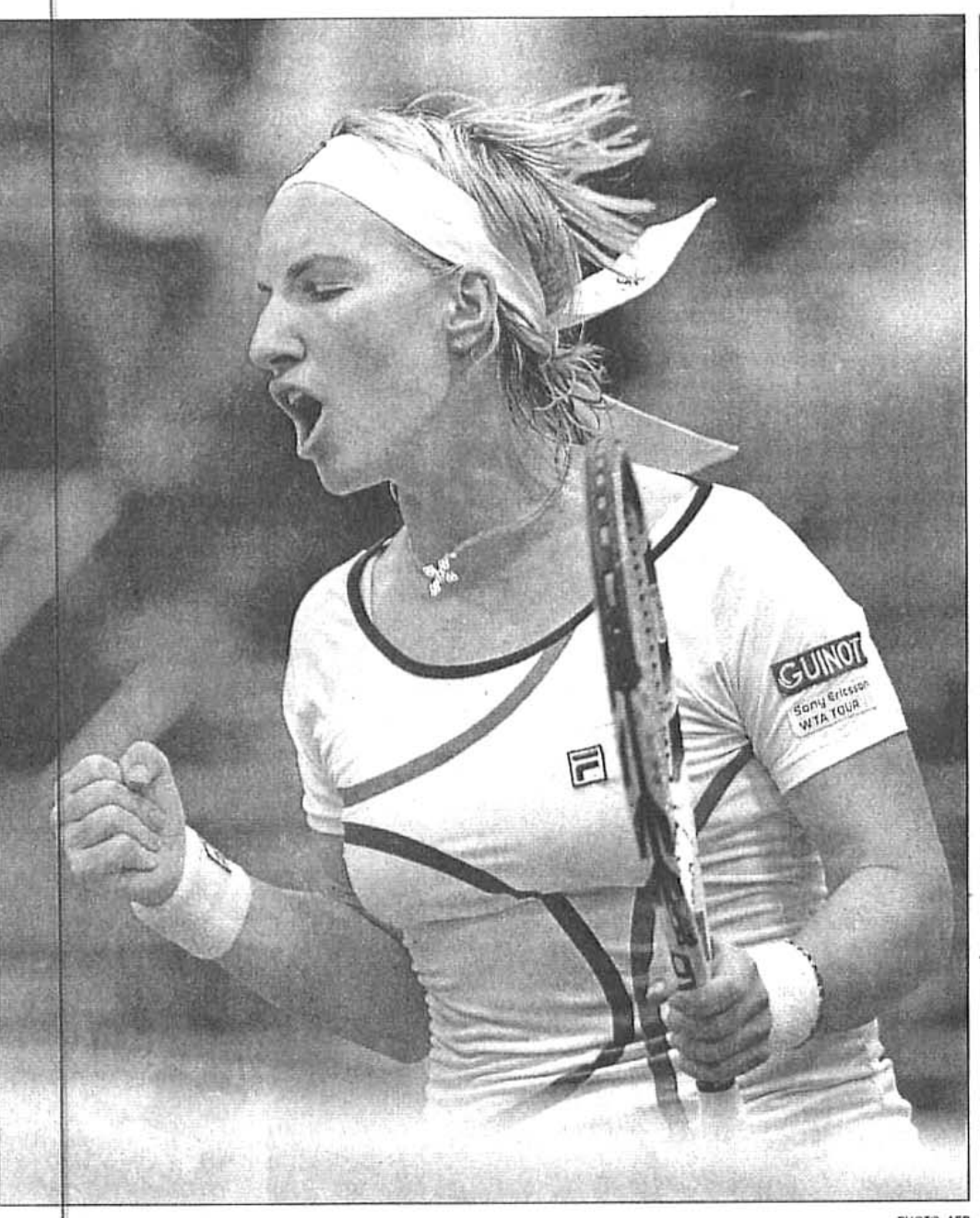
# England need

FROM PAGE 17

Mubarak b Sidebottom 20  
Vaas c Pietersen b Sidebottom 2  
Fernando not out 3  
Malinga not out 3  
Extras: (lb-3, w-11) 14  
Total: (For nine wks in 50 overs) 211  
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-16, 3-20, 4-146, 5-158, 6-166, 7-190, 8-195, 9-206.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	10	1	33	3
Sidebottom	10	2	27	3
Broad	10	0	54	2
Collingwood	6	0	28	1
Swann	10	0	48	0
Bopara	4	0	18	0

Umpires: Rudi Koertzen (RSA) and Teyron Wijewardene (SRI)  
TV umpire: Asoka de Silva (SRI)  
Match referee: Javagal Srinath (IND)



Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova celebrates after beating Gisela Dulko of Argentina at the Kremlin Cup tennis tournament in Moscow yesterday.

# Good start for Davydenko

AFP, MOSCOW

Russian Nikolay Davydenko, top seed and reigning champion of the 2.34 million-dollar joint ATP and WTA Kremlin Cup, began his title defence with a confident straight-sets win over France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga here on Tuesday. The world's number four won his first ever match with Tsonga 7-6 (7/0), 6-2, in one hour 27 minutes.

The 26-year-old broke in the seventh game but Tsonga broke back immediately to level forcing a tiebreak, which Davydenko won to love for a 1-0 lead after 52 minutes.

In the second Davydenko took command, breaking early for a comfortable 3-0 lead, then again in the eighth game.

"I watched plenty of Tsonga at the US Open and I admired the way he played aggressively, frequently advancing to the net," Davydenko said.

"I was preparing myself for this style today but he wasn't playing this way making life much easier for me," Davydenko next faces Nicolas Lapentti of Ecuador, who battled from a set down to beat France's Fabrice Santoro 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Another Frenchman Paul-Henri Mathieu, fourth seed here, booked his second round pass with an easy 6-2, 6-2 win over a compatriot Sebastien Grosjean in one hour six minutes, his first ever win over Grosjean in their three meetings.

"I tried to play solid tennis today after losing three times in a row in the first round and it was a success," Mathieu said.

"I tried not to miss too much and to finally find my rhythm. It's great to beat somebody, who you've never beaten before."

Fifth seed Marat Safin, who appeared in the main draw courtesy of a wildcard, looked slightly rusty after a long break but also proceeded into the second round with a 7-6 (7/2), 7-5 win over his Russian compatriot Denis Matsukevich.

In the women's section eighth seed Nicole Pietrangeli of Czech Republic saw off Russia's qualifier Yaroslava Shvedova 7-6 (7/3), 6-3 in one hour 25 minutes.

Gisela Dulko of Argentina overcame Sania Mirza of India 6-3, 6-4 to meet top seed Svetlana Kuznetsova, of Russia, who enjoyed the first-round bye, for a quarter-final place.

# Brett in Hindi movies?

INTERNET, undated

On a recent promotional visit to India, Brett Lee was escorted away and locked in a back room until a crowd of frenzied, adoring onlookers dissipated. "They kill you with love," he quipped. "This is the home of cricket."

Barely 12 months since the shopping mall, Lee has returned to India with the Australian one-day side. And, much to his amazement, the game's popularity appears to have grown in the world's second-most populous country over that period.

"This has probably been the series with the most interest since I've been coming here," Lee said. "I've been on a few tours now with the Australian side, and it's always been massive, but the last couple of weeks have been huge."

"I think the Twenty20 has had a lot to do with it, which is great for world cricket and great for India. This is where cricket is, this is the home of cricket. This is where it all happens, and the people just love their cricket. There would have been a couple of thousand people waiting for us at the hotel tonight."

Of all Australia's cricketers, Lee attracts the greatest affection from the Indian public. Images of the paceman can be found emblazoned on T-shirts, billboards and magazines across the country, and his deeds on the pitch are analysed and dissected in infinitesimal detail on India's cricket-devoted television channels.

Lee feels neither overwhelmed, nor overexposed, by these developments. In fact, he plans to increase his presence in India over the next 12 months. Following the chart success of his debut single with Asha Bhosle last year, Lee plans to record and release his first studio album in India during breaks in Australia's cricketing schedule. And his artistic ambitions don't end there: having fielded and rejected several Bollywood approaches due to time constraints, Lee confirmed his desire to grace India's silver screen at the conclusion of his cricketing career.

Lee, along with his manager, Neil Maxwell, is also in the process of forming a charitable fund in India, which he hopes will be unveiled next year.

"Steve Waugh is loved over here because he has done so much charity work, and that's how I would like to be remembered, as well -- someone who enjoyed his cricket but also put a fair bit back in," Lee said. "Hopefully I've only scratched the surface. There's heaps of other things I want to do over here, like maybe a movie."

# Smith puts SA in control

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Pakistan's main hope rested on Inzamam who survived just five deliveries before edging seamer Kallis to wicket-keeper Mark Boucher.

The 37-year-old batsman now needs just six runs in the next innings to erase the record of the most Test runs by a Pakistani batsman currently held by Javed Miandad with 8,832.

Captain Shoaib Malik did not last long as he failed to keep a sharp rising delivery from paceman Dale Steyn and was caught at short-leg by Amla for just one.

Misbah, who made a career-best 41, added 39 runs for the seventh wicket with Rehman (25 not out) before Ntini ended any hopes of a late-order charge.

Ntini almost took a hat-trick. He dismissed Haq, who improved on his best Test score of 23, caught behind off a rash drive outside the off-stump.

He then trapped Gul with his second delivery and then came agonisingly close when an edge off Kaneria fell short of the slips fielder. Off his sixth, Ntini had Kaneria caught by Boucher for his 400th victim.

Boucher set a world record for the most dismissals behind the stumps in the first Test in Karachi, beating Australian Ian Healy's record of 395.

Scoreboard at close on the third day of the second Test between Pakistan and South Africa at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Wednesday:				
SOUTH AFRICA: 357 (Prince 63, Kallis 59, Boucher 54; Kaneria 4-114)				
PAKISTAN: First innings (over-night 140-4)				
Butt c Smith b Harris	40			
Akmal c Smith b Harris	52			
Younis Khan b Nel	3			
Yousuf b b b Steyn	25			
Inzamam c Boucher b Ntini	14			
Misbah c Boucher b Ntini	41			
Malik c Amla b Steyn	1			
Rehman not out	25			
Gul b b b Ntini	0			
Kaneria c Boucher b Ntini	0			
Asif c Amla b Harris	4			

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Ntini	8	1	42	3
Steyn	12	3	60	2
Nel	16	3	39	1
Harris	20	5	57	3
Kallis	7	2	7	1

Extras: (lb-1) 1  
Total: (All out in 63 overs) 206  
Fall of wickets: 1-90, 2-93, 3-99, 4-123, 5-149, 6-150, 7-189, 8-189, 9-189.

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Asif	4	1	14	0
Gul	12	2	40	1
Kaneria	21	4	54	0
Rehman	18	3	38	1

Umpires: Mark Benson (ENG) and Simon Taufel (AUS)  
TV umpire: Nadeem Ghouri (PAK)  
Match referee: Alan Hurst (AUS)

# Whatmore takes India NCA job

AFP, New Delhi

Renowned coach Dav Whatmore has accepted a job with India's cricket academy four months after being snubbed for the post of the national team's head coach.

The former Australian Test batsman, 53, will take over as director of operations at the Bangalore-based National Cricket Academy later this month, the academy's newly-appointed chairman Ravi Shastri said on Wednesday.

"I am glad to have Whatmore on board because he is one of the best in the business," said Shastri, an ex-India captain and noted television commentator.

"He will be at the academy for three years."

Whatmore, who shot to fame after masterminding Sri Lanka's World Cup win in 1996 and served Bangladesh with distinction for four years, was seen as the likely choice for the India job when Greg Chappell quit after the World Cup.

But Indian officials did not even invite Whatmore for an interview and are still hunting for a permanent coach after South African Graham Ford declined to accept their offer.

Whatmore, who was also overlooked by Pakistan following the death of their national coach Bob Woolmer, said he looked forward to working at the academy.

"It did not take me long to realise there's value in being associated with it," Whatmore was quoted as saying in the local media.

"I can give something. I've known Ravi (Shastri) for a number of years. We understand each other well and I'm looking forward to a formal association with him."

Whatmore played the last of his seven Tests for Australia in 1979, ending his short career with 293 runs at an average of 22.53.

# Sree doing it off the field

CRICINFO, undated

Indian bowler Shanthakumaran Sreesanth has denied clapping in the face of Andrew Symonds after he was dismissed in the fourth one-day match on Monday. Sreesanth, a 12th man in Chandigarh, reportedly had to be calmed down by Stuart Clark, who was also running the drinks, when Symonds was approached between the field and the entry to the dressing room.

Sreesanth has had an eventful series after targeting the Australians with his strange behaviour and he apparently continued to argue with Symonds and his teammates after the eight-run loss. Despite not playing, Sreesanth went to Symonds as he walked off with 75 and observers said he clapped in the batsman's face.

"I said to him: 'Hard luck, you're going to lose now,'" Sreesanth said in the Australian. "That's all." Both the Australian and the Sydney Morning Herald reported the bizarre actions that continued an ugly series, which has its fifth game at Vadodara on Thursday.

However, neither Chris Broad, the match referee, or Lalchand Rajput, India's manager, were aware of the Sreesanth-Symonds incident. Rajput said Sreesanth had been talked to about his behaviour in the early part of the series.

"He was told that he has been playing international cricket for long enough now that he should know what is right and wrong," he told the Herald. Both players also had an on-field argument during the second match in Kochi when Sreesanth tried to run-out Symonds after he had gone to speak with Brad Haddin.

# BCB forms

FROM PAGE 17

domestic cricket from now on instead of the umpires committee.

The working committee also endorsed the decision of Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan about the relegation league and confirmed Bangladesh's participation in the Hong Kong Sixes and Ireland's visit to Bangladesh in mid-March next year.

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(15,563), most hundreds (41) and half-centuries (84). He also has a world-record 37 centuries in Tests.

TEAMS  
INDIA (probable): Sourav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar, Robin Uthappa, Yuvraj Singh, Rahul Dravid, Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Irfan Pathan, Murali Kartik, Harbhajan Singh, Zaheer Khan, Rudra Pratap Singh.  
AUSTRALIA (probable): Adam Gilchrist, Matthew Hayden, Ricky Ponting (captain), Michael Clarke, Andrew Symonds, Brad Hodge, James Hopes, Brett Lee, Brad Hogg, Nathan Bracken, Mitchell Johnson.

# 'I don't make groups'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Graeme Smith, the South African captain, says he is determined to dismiss rumours of a 'captain's clique' in the squad. Smith, 26, has been accused of allegedly being a dictator and not being inclusive enough with some players, and admits there were times when he was too close to certain individuals.

"I'm not afraid to take a close look at myself ... it is something that I am conscious of all the time. I am aware of spreading my time around the team as much as possible," Smith said in the latest edition of The Wisden Cricketer South Africa. "Eighty per cent of the time guys are going to go out for dinner with people they are comfortable with and I don't think anybody in the team is going to moan about that. But as the captain I have to be more aware of my role."

"I do find it ironic that people have accused me of not consulting the senior players and being a dictator. Then, when I do consult them a lot, I'm accused of having a clique! But I know I haven't always got the balance right and I am determined to spend more time with each player and not so much with one group, even if they are close friends. And I'll do that because I want to, not because I have to."

Smith felt the issue of 'cliques' could have stemmed from players excluded from the national squad, especially when they spend time together and look for reasons beyond their own performances for why they were left out. He said the difference between experienced players, such as Jacques Kallis and Mark Boucher, and others "who are not so secure in either themselves or their games" needed to be broken down.

The perennial selection issue has been raised again recently, especially with so many domestic and former international players leaving South Africa to play in England. A lot of players, white and black, have been speaking off the record about their dislike of quotas. According to Smith, many players of colour are categorised unfairly and that pushing youngsters too soon harms them mentally and physically.

"I worry about the guys who have been given a comfortable lifestyle with franchise contracts and a good salary," he said. "They play all the time without a great deal of pressure and life's good in their comfort zone. But if they get pushed up to international level where you have to work much, much harder, they are not ready - and maybe they don't want it, the hard work or the extra pressure."

Smith also responded to criticism of his players drinking excessively, saying it was part of a socialising culture which he had no problems with after success. "It's a celebration together; getting through a big game is an incredible feeling and celebrating together is important ... like after battling through a Test series for 20 days and finally winning. That element of celebration will always be there and I'm all in favour of guys celebrating their wins. I am also big on giving guys time to let their hair down and relax a bit."

# Taylor lauds Hayden

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

Former Australia skipper Mark Taylor says greed is good when it comes to opener Matthew Hayden.

Having become the first Australian to reach 1500 one-day runs in a calendar year, after striking 92 in the loss to India in Chandigarh on Monday, Hayden will on Thursday play his 150th one-day international in Vadodara.

Taylor lauded Hayden, who eclipsed Mark Waugh's 1999 calendar record of 1468 runs, as Australia's prized asset at the top of the order in both forms of the game.

"It's a testament to his concentration, skills and his desire to keep going," Taylor said of Hayden, who has a chart-topping 261 runs at 65.25 in four Future Cup games.

"A lot of blokes approaching 36 would have thought they had had a pretty good run, maybe it could be time to go, but not Matty."

"He wanted to prove more and get to the World Cup."

It's a stunning achievement for Hayden, given he was a one-day outcast a year ago.

"There was a game against New Zealand in Perth where Matty Hayden got dropped twice before he got to four," said Taylor, recalling how Hayden resurrected his one-day career by blasting 117 at the WACA Ground in January.

"It's amazing how things can change."

Daniel Vettori and Ross Taylor dropped the struggling opener when on nought and four to open Hayden's gateway to World Cup selection.

It was the big left-hander's first one-day ton in two years.

"Had New Zealand grabbed one of those chances, he may not have played the World Cup, wouldn't have been at the Twenty20 in South Africa and wouldn't have won the ICC one-day player of the year," Taylor said.

Skipper Ricky Ponting rated Hayden Australia's leading one-day opener even when he was languishing in the wilderness before the World Cup.

"I will back guys that I have played a lot of cricket with and know what they are capable of," Ponting said, acknowledging Hayden's 1526 runs, including five tons and six half-centuries at 63.58 in 28 matches this year.

"You saw that with Andrew Symonds at the 2003 World Cup and Matty the last couple of years, and even Brett Lee when his Test career was on the edge."

"I get a feel about these blokes, know what they can do and what they are capable of. Sometimes it just takes a little confidence from someone like me or the selectors to give them another opportunity."

Taylor says Hayden has plenty of credit points in the bank, with brilliant one-day and World Twenty20 Championship form underlining his ability.

"He still wants to keep going. Watching him, he still looks very focused and like he wants to get more," Taylor said.

# Owen will lead attack

FROM PAGE 20

"We have got to make sure we don't make the mistake we made 12 months ago when we drew at home with Macedonia. That cost us two precious points and we need that positive result against Estonia."

Estonia failed to garner a single point in their first seven games in group E but they have become significantly harder to beat since experienced Dane Viggo Jensen took over as coach in August and have since beaten Andorra, secured a creditable draw in Macedonia and restricted Croatia to a 2-0 win in Zagreb -- the same margin that England lost by.

"They've got a new coach and a new way of playing," McClaren said. "We have to treat them with respect - but we also have to take the confidence of the performances and victories against Israel and Russia last month into these two games."

Skipper John Terry has insisted he wants to face Estonia despite being forced to wear a mask to protect a fractured cheekbone and the Chelsea centre-back may get his wish following the withdrawal from the squad of back-up defender Wes Brown, who has been sent back to Manchester United with a knee injury.

McClaren has pledged to keep faith with Paul Robinson in goal, despite his indifferent form for Tottenham, and the signs are that he could sidestep his major selection dilemma -- whether or not to restore Frank Lampard to the midfield.

While Lampard was out injured last month, Gareth Barry grabbed his opportunity by combining with Steven Gerrard in central midfield more convincingly than the Chelsea midfielder ever has.

But with Shaun Wright-Phillips only just back from injury, McClaren may opt for a Gerrard-Lampard-Barry three-man midfield.

"Frank Lampard has not got anything extra to prove," the coach insisted.

"He has been a great servant for England. He was our man of the match against Germany (in August friendly defeat). Unfortunately, he has not played since then, but he comes back into the picture now. He had 90 minutes for Chelsea at the weekend and he is looking good in training."

### CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38 Calendar abbr.	58 Fifth word in the	9 Huge burden
1 Beavers' construction	40 "Smoking or --?"	Gettysburg Address	10 Wicked
4 Follicle parts	41 Dumbo's "wings"	59 Peacock	20 Leave out
9 Kitten's call	43 Most ironic	21 Sail support	
12 Irving Berlin's "What'll --?"	45 Bow obsequiously	22 Domini preceptor	
13 Farewell	47 Storm center	2 Okla-homa	23 Cupid's
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17 Cover	49 Alternative to	4 Motor-cycle name	32 Thrash
18 Big name in boxing	54 Chum	5 Fan	34 He'll give you a
19 Coral rings	56 Blood-group letters	6 Roman 3	ring
21 Dag's owner	57 Ailing	7 Pass the baton	37 Tired
24 Sweet potatoes		8 Brunel bigwig	39 Under-ground vaults
25 Pismire			42 1984
26 Evergreen			44 Verily
28 Salt-peter			45 Military hat
31 Uppity one			46 Ellipse
33 British rule of India			50 Meadow
35 Flipped			51 Skillet
36 Strengthened			52 Records
			53 Mythical flier

Solution time: 24 mins.

FLW	ACTS	GRW	CRW
OAR	OIER	LEVI	
RIG	OGRE	IDES	
DRIE	BARBAR	YMO	
JOE	EG	AMP	
ORE	IAM	BLAT	
GIN	OHM	ULTRA	
	GAY	ARA	
	MOUNT	RUSHMORE	
AURA	ONTO	VOL	
TSAR	UDOL	USA	
WELL	DOIRY	MEN	

### CRYPTOQUIP

OYDTX Y ORESSXW RGLYDV  
RE EFXGZL KL WGYFXG'O  
CYTXDOX. Y VHXOO YR'O YD  
OHOSXDWW - CZKYDZRYED.  
Saturday's Cryptquip: FUNNY-NEW SITCOM  
ABOUT A WEIRD FAMILY WHOSE MEMBERS  
USE MUCH WORDPLAY: "THE PUNSTERS."  
Today's Cryptquip Clue: O equals S