

Mahela asks batsmen to fire

CRICINFO, undated

Mahela Jayawardene has urged his side to adopt a smarter approach following Sri Lanka's 63-run loss to Australia in the sixth CB Series match in Perth.

Sri Lanka were in with a great chance to notch up their first win over Australia but a meek batting performance put paid to their chances. "We need to go hard, but the shot selection has to be a bit better," he said after the loss. "In world cricket a lot of guys do go hard up front, with the power plays and all that, but the guys have got to be a bit smarter."

Kumar Sangakkara played a lone hand in the Sri Lankan run-chase but the rest gave it away with some poor strokeplay. "The way we lost wickets was not good," he said. "At crucial times, we keep losing wickets and you can't do that in a run-chase."

The tailenders once again failed to make an impression - the last five wickets put together only 14 - and Jayawardene wanted to see Chamara Silva, Farveez Maharoof, Chamara Kapugedera and Nuwan Kulasekera take up more responsibility with the bat. "These guys can bat and they have scored runs and we need to get their confidence back," he said.

Sri Lanka, who were off to a poor start in the series, revived their chances with a thumping eight-wicket win against India on Tuesday. However, Sri Lanka's batsmen are yet to fire against Australia - having collapsed against them on both occasions. Sanath Jayasuriya has shown only glimpses of form, with 46 runs at 15.33, while Jayawardene, Silva and Tillakaratne Dilshan all fell cheaply when up against Australia.

Arendse, Majola say sorry

REUTERS, Centurion

Cricket South Africa (CSA) President Norman Arendse and CEO Gerald Majola have apologised for their roles in the controversy surrounding team selection for the tour of Bangladesh.

The squad was finalised on Monday, two days before they left for Bangladesh, after Arendse initially declined to approve the list which contained only four black players.

"Cricket South Africa, the custodians of the sport in the country, must take full responsibility for not handling the issue in a manner that preserves the integrity and reputation of the sport, the pair said in a statement released by CSA on Friday.

"In this regard, the President and the CEO of Cricket South Africa wish to express their deep and sincere regret at the manner in which the issue leading up to the selection of the team to tour Bangladesh, has been handled.

"We issue our sincerest apology to the entire nation... for the manner in which the matter had been handled. We accept responsibility for what happened, and wish to commit ourselves to ensuring that it will never happen again."

CSA policy states that six black players should be included in a 14-man squad. The squad was eventually released without Arendse's approval.

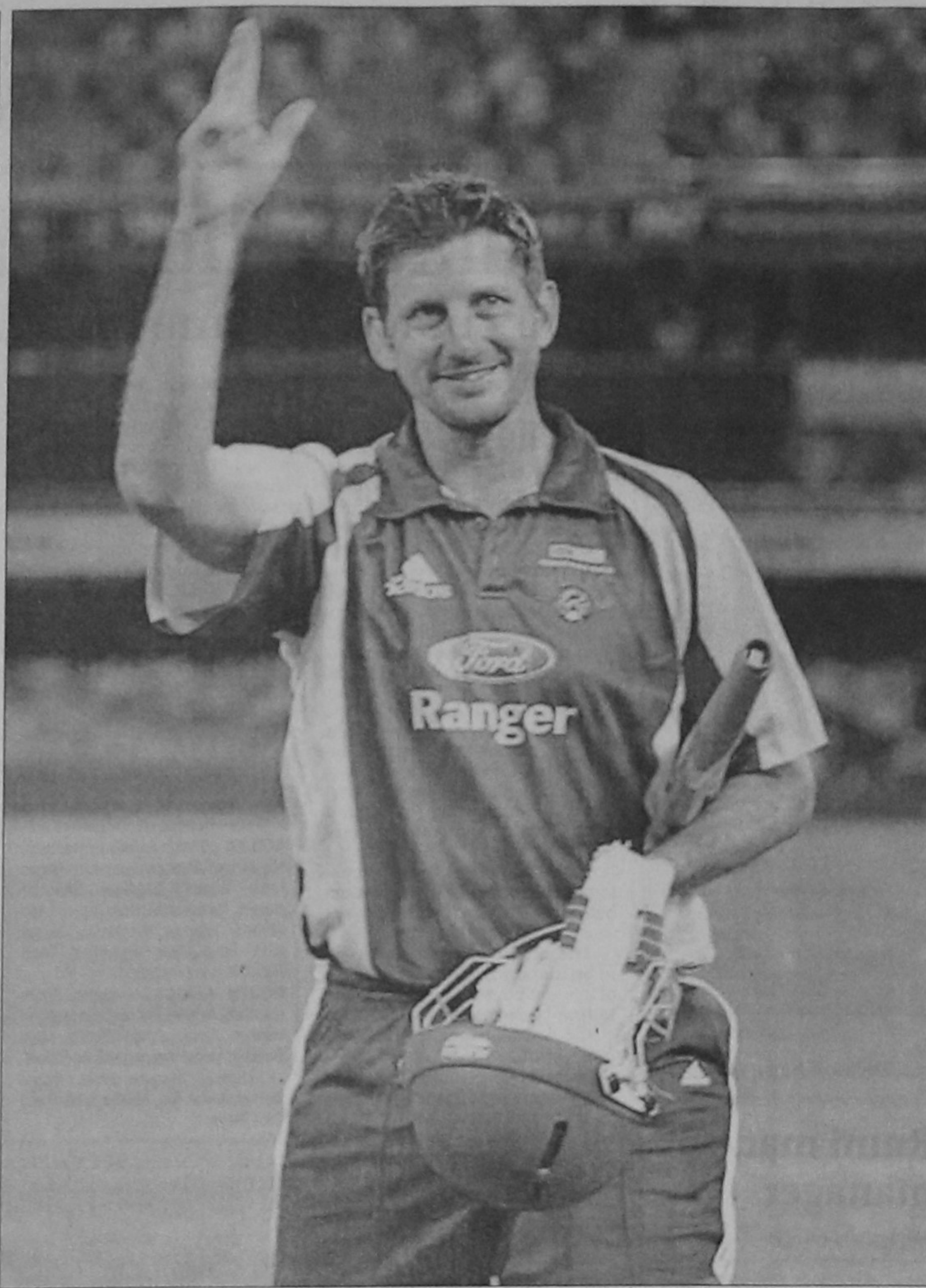
Robin Peterson's late inclusion in place of injured fellow spinner Paul Harris took the number of black players in the tour squad to five.

The statement added CSA was still committed to its transformation policy "aimed at ensuring that the imbalances of the past are redressed as soon as possible."

"...We lastly wish to publicly acknowledge that mistakes were made in the process of the selection of the team, and that any finger pointing is not going to assist in restoring any damage or harm that may have been caused to the game of cricket over the recent days.

"Accordingly, the President and the CEO commit to working together within the legal and constitutional structures of Cricket South Africa with a common goal and purpose, with a view towards ensuring the restoration of the good name and reputation of Cricket South Africa, and that the game is administered for the benefit of all," the statement said.

England's WC FROM PAGE 20 out at the idea. Associations and officials in countries which could potentially stage overseas matches have given a distinctly lukewarm response while views are mixed in the English topflight.



Former Australia and Queensland pacer Michael Kasprovic waves goodbye after his final innings in the FR Cup match against Western Australia in Brisbane yesterday.

Goodbye, Whacker

Cricket

JON PIERIK

A private net session before his teammates arrived provided the platform for Adam Gilchrist's farewell one-day international century at the WACA Ground on Friday.

More than two hours before play started against Sri Lanka, Gilchrist (118 off 132 balls) was working on his timing through repeated throwdowns from coach Tim Nielsen.

Frustrated by an unlucky duck at the MCG last Sunday he was given out lbw despite hitting the ball into his leg, the soon-to-retire Gilchrist was determined to do well for the last time in his adopted home city of Perth.

That he did as he blasted his 16th one-day international century still eight behind Ricky Ponting's Australian record to bankroll the world champion's otherwise lacklustre 236 in 49.4 overs.

In front of his wife Mel, family, friends and a sell-out crowd, Gilchrist thumped nine boundaries and three sixes and was in sublime touch.

The Perth crowd arose as one when he notched his ton off 117 balls, having been forced to tiptoe through the 90s in singles as the pressure of the moment hit home.

An outpouring of emotion followed, as Gilchrist jumped in the air and acknowledged the cheers.

While many fans no doubt are wondering why Gilchrist has retired, the Sri Lankans must be rejoicing as Gilchrist has now crunched four centuries in his past eight innings against them.

This latest milestone proved a pressure release as Gilchrist immediately went about lifting the tempo and was given a life on 117 when dropped by Chamara Kapugedera off the spin of Muttiah Muralidaran at deep mid-wicket.

But the fun ended in the next over when he mistimed a drive off Lasith Malinga and allowed Kapugedera to make amends, running with the flight of the ball at cover.

Sling-king Malinga was the best of the Sri Lankan bowlers with four wickets.

While Gilchrist was the toast of the town, the woes continued for Ponting (25 off 25) as he was caught behind the wicket for the fourth time in as many matches this series.

The Australian captain now has just 43 runs at 10.75 in the tri-series.

Ponting's dismissal brought Michael Clarke (43 off 69) to the crease, and he and Gilchrist shared in a 105-run stand before Clarke was deceived by a Muttiah Muralidaran doosra and was stumped.

(Jon Pierik wrote this article for news.co.au.)

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Wenger's duels with Ferguson have provided an enthralling backdrop to life in the Premier League over the last decade and the two old rivals are going at it again this season.

Arsenal led the Premier League and sit five points ahead of United, with an FA Cup fifth round tie between the clubs at Old Trafford on Saturday certain to add another layer of intrigue to the rivalry.

They could still clash in the Champions League as well and although Wenger has the upper hand at present, he knows better than to write off one of the few other managers who can match his will to win.

"I feel they are still in the race because, two games ago we were

ble of winning the games. "You must be destroyed when you lose and happy when you win in this job. It feels like that but that's why you are in the job."

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Portuguese

FROM PAGE 20 proceedings were adjourned for a week.

The investigations go back to 2004 since when 16 arrests and more than 70 searches have been made into alleged match-fixing.

The corruption allegations have not spared even the most powerful clubs in Portugal, with the chairman of champions Porto, Jorge Pinto da Costa, freed on bail in October 2005 as he too came under investigation before proceedings were finally dropped.

"I am proud of what we achieved in my five years at St James' Park. "They talk of the 'big four' now as if they are untouchable, but we smashed through the barrier when we finished third ahead of both Chelsea and Liverpool - and it wasn't that long ago, 2003 to be exact. "I took the club to fourth, third and fifth-top of the Premier League, and that's sustained success. "Mind you, I still got the sack from fifth-top, which hurt and baffled me, but I am not going to dwell on that."

Ranjan moves to doubles' semis

SPORTS REPORTER

Local boy Ranjan Ram and his doubles partner Lin from Chinese Taipei moved into the semifinal of the Dhaka Bank 22nd International Junior Tennis tournament at the Ramna National Tennis Complex yesterday.

The pair eliminated local pair of Mazhar and Tazmul 6-4, 6-2 in the boys' doubles qualifying quarterfinal.

In the day's other boys' doubles matches, Indonesian Ivan Regan and Indian Gangasharam, Manuja and Ahuja of India and Dellorto of Hong Kong and Stevenson of Canada booked the semifinal berth, eliminating their respective opponents.

In the girls' singles matches, Poojashree Venkatesh of India beat Dutch Demi Schuurs 6-4, 6-2 and Zhao Di of China beat Sonia Dayal of India 6-1, 6-2.

Second phase of golf training starts

SPORTS REPORTER

Forty-seven young and talented golfers will receive free training as part of an initiative to improve the state of golf in the country.

This was disclosed at a press conference at the Kurmitola golf club on Friday, hosted by Gemcon Group, sponsors of the Young Tigers Golf Training Programme.

Senior vice-president of Bangladesh Golf Federation Maj Gen Shaiful Islam, vice-chairman of Gemcon Group Kazi Nabil Ahmed were present during the occasion.

The youngsters include ball boys, caddies, wards of the members of Bangladesh Golf Federation and students from Scholastica, Bangladesh International Tutorial and Aga Khan School. Dulal Hossain, a trainee from the first phase who has already participated in a few international events, received Tk 15,000 during the inauguration ceremony held along side the press conference.

Mahimaganj ride on Shahidul

OUR CORRESPONDENT, undated

Mahimaganj High School crushed Gaibandha Police Line School by nine wickets in the Standard Chartered Young Tigers school cricket competition at the local stadium here yesterday.

Batting first after winning the toss, Police Line School scored only 112 runs in 27 overs. Mahimaganj wrapped up the score in only 14 overs with Shahidul hitting 31 off 15 balls.

Kanchipara MU Academy will face Shahidul Sarkar High School in today's match.

Stars back U-19

FROM PAGE 17 England and India have both taken it home once while Pakistan were the dominant force in the last two editions.

Young guns are not daunted by reputations. In 2006, cricketing non-entirety Nepal stunned South Africa in the preliminary league and went on to defeat New Zealand in the Plate final.

The 10 regular cricket nations -- Australia, England, India, Pakistan, West Indies, Sri Lanka, South Africa, New Zealand, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe -- will be joined by five qualifiers and hosts Malaysia.

The regional qualifiers are Namibia (Africa), Nepal (Asia), Papua New Guinea (East Asia-Pacific), Ireland (Europe) and Bermuda (Americas).

The 16 teams have been divided into four groups with the top two qualifying for the quarterfinals.

In Sunday's opening matches, defending champions Pakistan take on hosts Malaysia, Australia play Namibia, India are pitted against Papua New Guinea and England meet Ireland.

I was just

FROM PAGE 20 For di Stefano, who became a Spanish citizen in 1956, the best players presently playing are Barcelona's Argentinian playmaker Lionel Messi, AC Milan's Brazilian star Kaka and Manchester United's Portuguese wing Cristiano Ronaldo while France great Zinedine Zidane was without doubt the greatest player to have donned Real Madrid's strip in recent years.

Di Stefano, played for 'the meringues' from 1953-63 after beginning his career with Argentinian outfit River Plate.

Di Stefano was capped 31 times by his adopted country and scored 49 goals in the European Cup for Real, a spell that saw them win European club football's most prestigious trophy five times.

He was twice named European Footballer of the Year in 1957 and 1959, won the Spanish title eight times and was five times top scorer in the domestic league.

'Ponting feels the strain'

AFP, Perth



Australian skipper Ricky Ponting. Ponting has endured a lean run on home turf by his own lofty standards.

He scored just 128 runs at 21.33 in the first three Tests of the contentious series against India, which Australia won 2-1, before grafting out a hundred in the final Test in Adelaide.

In the tri-series, he has been troubled by back soreness and scored just 43 runs at 10.75, reaching double figures for the first time in Friday's win over Sri Lanka.

Most worrying for Ponting is the number of times he has been caught behind the wicket, a trend

that continued on Friday when he guided a ball straight to first slip.

Vice-captain Gilchrist said a long Test and one-day campaign, combined with off-field issues were a heavy load for Ponting to bear.

Among the dramas Ponting found himself in the middle of was the controversy over Indian bowler Harbhajan Singh, who was accused by Aussie all-rounder Andrew Symonds of racism during the infamous Sydney Test. He also became caught up in the row over players taking part in the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL).

"I am sure he, like all of us, will have been worn down by a lot of the focus and a lot of the issues that have been around," Gilchrist said after the 63-run win over Sri Lanka that lifted Australia back to the top of the tri-series table.

"We seem to have jumped from one thing to another, whether they be highly controversial or just issues that need to be dealt with. Things like the Pakistan tour hang-

ing around, the IPL, the Indian Test series and all the issues there in the (Harbhajan) hearing.

"He has had to take the brunt of it and I think we have got to acknowledge that he does that and stands up and wants to do it, that is his job."

Gilchrist said Ponting had been doing a great job under the circumstances and backed his class to shine through with the bat before too long.

He said it was up to the other players to show their support for Ponting.

"He is still running the team beautifully, captaining," Gilchrist said.

"We have got to rally around him and keep him going but he is a class act and he will be fine."

Gilchrist said the scheduling of the tri-series, with Australia playing only on Fridays and Sundays, also made life tough, and conceded the squad struggled with a four-day break followed by two games in three days.

Adam's relief with ton

AFP, Perth



Australia's Adam Gilchrist admitted he was relieved to have successfully completed an emotional WACA farewell after his match-winning century against Sri Lanka.

The 36-year-old, who will hang up the pads after the tri-series, gave his home fans one more innings to remember with a controlled 118 which lifted Australia to a crucial 63-run win.

Although the wicketkeeper-batsman made his decision to retire last month, Gilchrist said the enormity of the move only hit him during Friday's match, where chants of "Gilly" rang out around

the stands. "Today (Friday) was where it really hit me, that it is all finishing," he said.

"Today was always going to be a big day, so I was more nervous than any day, leading into here.

"I am glad it is done... there was a lot of emotion in there."

Gilchrist said he was determined to make a big score to thank local supporters, who booed him when he started his career with Western Australia but soon embraced the popular New South Welshman.

He admitted it had been a draining final period of his career after a contentious Test series with India and controversy swirling over the lucrative Indian Premier League, which he will join in April.

"It's a difficult schedule this one, not playing for four days and

then playing back-to-back," he said.

"There is a lot of downtime between the Sunday and Friday games and maybe all of us have struggled on the back of an intense Test series."

Nevertheless, the win lifted Australia back to the top of the tri-series ladder and Gilchrist said it was an important victory.

"It keeps us right up there now and eases the pressure on the next few games," he said.

"That said, if we drop one we'll be back in the same position."

Gilchrist holds the world record for Test dismissals (414) and has won three World Cups with Australia.

Australia's next game is against India in Adelaide on Sunday, while Sri Lanka play India at the same venue on Tuesday.

Seedorf worries for friend

FROM PAGE 20

think about returning to action with AC Milan at the end of the year.

Galliani earlier told the Ansa news agency that Ronaldo's left knee is in better shape than his right knee was eight years ago, when his career was similarly under threat.

Galliani said at an Italian league meeting in Milan: "He (Ronaldo) is still feeling a little pain but it seems the tendon of the (left) knee is in better shape than that of the right knee which was operated on eight years ago."

Meanwhile, Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti said that it was impossible to say whether or not the player's career was over.

"Nobody knows. Only Ronaldo can know and it's up to him to say what happens from now on," said Ancelotti.

"It all depends on his desire. I hope that the finds that desire as there is enough time for him to do great things. He faces a long rehabilitation process but he knows that at 31 he could still play another two or three years."

"If he appreciates this and he wants to come back, it will happen. He knows he can't play until he's 40 - he's a striker."

Ronaldo flew to Paris after rupturing a tendon in his left knee during AC Milan's 1-1 draw with Livorno on Wednesday.

Renowned French surgeon Professor Gerard Saillant, who supervised the two-hour operation and who operated on Ronaldo in both 1999 and 2000, said he would be out of action for nine months.

"I have not spoken directly with Leonardo (the club official accompanying Ronaldo)," Galliani added. "I am not a doctor and therefore I will not be making a guess at how long he will be out."

IPL faces a new wall

CRICINFO, undated

A quirky Cricket Australia regulation has provided a last-minute hitch in negotiations to allow its contract holders to take part in the Indian Premier League. Lalit Modi, the IPL commissioner, has set a Sunday deadline for registration for Thursday's player auction, but that is in doubt due to a condition that prevents more than two Australians appearing in the same overseas team.

Sixteen Australians have expressed interest in joining the Twenty20 competition starting in April, but Cricket Australia wants to wait until after the draft before releasing any of them to satisfy its limit. The move extends the uncertainty over how many of the country's players will be involved in the IPL.

Modi has previously said anyone who didn't sign by Sunday would have to wait three years for another chance to join, but Cricket Australia believes the BCCI understands its situation. However, the news has not been as well received by some of the eight franchisees who are preparing bids to develop their squads.

"The long-standing regulation, which was around back when Cricket Australia was the Australian Cricket Board, means we won't give clearance to more than two players in an overseas domestic team," Peter Young, Cricket Australia's general manager of corporate affairs, told Cricinfo. "We don't want something that could be seen as a de-facto Australian team."

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CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 40 Party 1 Ciliium 5 Early 8 Distort 12 Reed 13 Sought 14 Call 15 Rover 17 'Cave Bear' clans-woman 18 Roma's place 19 Card carrier 21 Leftover 22 Big show 23 Squid 26 Replacement 28 Filch 31 Profound 33 More, in 35 Roughly 36 Fashion 38 Chatter on and on

Grid for crossword puzzle with numbers 1-38 indicating starting positions for words.

CRYPTOQUIP N A B G K C P W N I R P W Q P Q T X Y E J Y L P Z B E D A Q N T W Q D P B M Y D G J Y L M K X D R N K K Y C N T B O L - Z W Y D P L O P N B T Yesterday's Cryptiquip: IF YOU HAIL FROM AN ISLAND WITH MANY ORANGUTANS, THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE YOU WERE BORNEO-BORN. Today's Cryptiquip Clue: P equals T