### Coach planning sans Symonds

AFP, Darwin

Australian coach Tim Nielsen has admitted he is preparing to tour India without star all-rounder Andrew Symonds.

Symonds is considering his future at the top level after being sent home from the current oneday series against Bangladesh for going fishing last Friday rather than attending a compulsory team meeting.

The Australians face an extremely testing tour of India in October as they attempt to defend the Border-Gavaskar Trophy they won in a controversial series earlier this year. In that series lingering on-field angst between Symonds and Indian spinner Harbhajan Singh dominated the headlines.

Nielsen, who had previously admitted concerns over Symonds's state of mind, told Australian Associated Press on Monday that there was no way to guarantee he would be available for the India series.

"I don't think we can at the moment, I don't think we can bank on much at all at the moment," said Nielsen.

"The only thing we can bank on is providing as much support as we possibly can for him to make the right decision for him and for us, to come back into the group 100 per cent committed. But how long is a piece of string?

"I don't know if Roy (Symonds's nickname) would understand or know how long it's going to take. I certainly don't."

The Australian squad for the series is expected to be named within weeks and Nielsen admitted it would create a significant void if Symonds was not available. But he said there was no timeline for a decision from the player.

"He could decide that he needs a bit more time than we thought, Nielsen said. "We just don't know, that's the hard part."

Symonds said on Monday he wanted time to consider his future.

### Football's

FROM PAGE 17

break, though, fell to Abahani when Abul's curling freekick from the left caught Aminul wrongfooted. The ball bounced off the crossbar and hit Emily on the head before harmlessly going over.

In a pulsating second half, Nazrul's gaffe almost cost Abahani dear when he accounted the ball to Bukola inside the box three minutes after resumption. But the Nigerian, top scorer of the tournament with eight goals, saw his placing shot on one on one cleared by Abahani keeper Biplab's leg-

Having scored in all his previous four matches, everyone expected him to convert the sitter but Abahani's quick attack down the right flank separated the two sides in the 54th minute.

Fullback Siraji sent the MVP of the tournament Ibrahim racing past a slow reacting Mohammedan centre-back Saikat and the Ghanaian forward cut a low through across the goal for a rushing Emily who slid the ball home for his fifth goal.

Abahani had two great chances to seal the match in the next ten minutes but Ibrahim's hard work went down the drains. Mamun lost control inside the box while Emily fired just over from close as Mohammedan hit back with what seemed to be a harmless long ball from the middle in the 71st min-

The ball fell to Sujan but the Abahani central defender, looking for an offside flag to go up, hesitated a moment to make a clearance inside the box, allowing Robin to pounce home for his fifth goal in the competition. It also earned the Mohammedan striker the man of the final award.

It was Sujan's last action as he had to leave the ground on a stretcher and Abahani, who were busy defending the rival attacks in the rest of the period, came close to snatch a winner on the stroke of 90 minutes through Mamun whose 35-yard left-footer forced a superb diving save by Aminul.

The indefatigable Ibrahim got a great opportunity to score his first goal of the tournament but the Ghanaian's first-time shot on Siraji's low cross missed Aminul's post in the 13th minute of extra time, leading the final to be decided on penalties.

Yellow cards: Bukola, Maruf (Mohammedan) and Yussif Mamun, Emily, Ibrahim (Abahani) TEAMS

MOHAMMEDAN: Aminul; Hassan Al Mamun, Rajani, Saikat; Nasir, Arman Aziz, Sharif (Emmanuelle, 65th), Hazem (70th), Kamal; Bukola and Robin (Komol, 103rd). ABAHANI: Biplab; Yussif, Nazrul, Sujan (Pradeep, 74th); Siraji, Joy (Pranotosh, 13th), Abul (Zahed, 99th), Mamun, Waly; Ibrahim and

Emily. Referee: Azad Rahman.



Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons (L) shares a light moment with opening batsman Tamim Iqbal during a training session in Darwin yesterday. Bangladesh take on Australia in the second ODI on Wednesday.

# Mahela still has positives

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Despite losing the one-day series to India -- their first-ever bilateral series defeat against them on home soil -- Mahela Jayawardene, the Sri Lankan captain, felt his side handled the pressure situations better, saying the Indians at times gave up a little too easily.

Sri Lanka failed to carry on their good form from the Tests, which they won 2-1. After thrashing India in the first one-dayer in Dambulla, they went on to lose the next three before claiming a consolation win in the final match in Colombo, as India were bowled out for an embarrassing 103 in 26.3 overs.

"I don't think we could be criticised for lacking fighting spirit," Jayawardene said. "Even when we were losing we were fighting. I

think the Indians tend to probably give up a bit too easily.

"We want to develop in our team the habit of not giving up till the last minute. You can go through tough situations and give in quite easily. We have to keep having belief in our ability.

Reflecting on the defeat, Jayawardene blamed the inconsistency in the batting. Sri Lanka have slipped as a one-day side after finishing runners-up in the World Cup last year, losing 16 and winning 15 since then. Their only saving grace was the Asia Cup title in Pakistan.

"I'm disappointed by the way we played. We had our opportunities but our day ricket has not been consistent. Especially with the bat, we have not been consistent," he said. "If you are not capable of getting the runs, it is quite difficult to win matches."

The bowling, Jayawardene

said, has a more settled look to it with the performances of Thilan Thushara and Nuwan Kulasekara, who took 10 and 11 wickets respectively in the ODIs. He added that the injury-hit seamers were progressing well.

"I think Kulasekara and Thilan Thushara have been consistent for us. Lasith [Malinga] has started bowling and [Ferveez] Mahroof is 100 per cent fit while Dilhara [Fernando] looks very good after the injury. So there is competition in the team which is good."

Jayawardene was appreciative of the support his team received in the dead rubber fifth ODI at the Premadasa Stadium.

"Losing the series was very disappointing. But the huge crowd had supported us throughout the series and they turned up (for the last match) as well. So we had to give something back to show the character of the team."

## Promotion behind success

Cricket

AFP, London

England all-rounder Andrew Flintoff believes his promotion to number five has boosted his form with the bat.

seven wicket win over South Africa or 15 overs." in the fourth one-day international at Lord's scoring 31 not out to add to half centuries at Headingley and The Oval.

After a fourth ankle operation and a side strain Flintoff could hardly score a run for Lancashire at the start of the season but has been lifted by Kevin Pietersen's decision to move him up the order in oneday cricket.

He said: "It is a stark contrast to the beginning of the season when I was playing for Lancashire and got four ducks. I didn't know where I

was going to score runs.

"But by playing more and more I've found my rhythm and I feel more at ease playing international cricket than county cricket. "When Kevin asked me to bat at

number five I was delighted -- I have had some of my best times going in at five -- it give you the Flintoff starred in Sunday's chance to get in before the last ten

Flintoff has had so many injury setbacks that he is refusing to go overboard about his current golden

He had gruelling spells in America and South Africa with his fitness coach Dave Roberts after his latest operation and says he would not have bothered if he did not think he would be back to his best.

Despite having a back spasm before Sunday's match he still took 3-21 before finishing the game off with the bat.

He added: "I am not going to

get carried away. If I did not feel I could play as well as I can I probably wouldn't have gone through it

"I probably took the glory at Lord's but the work had been done by Owais Shah and Kevin and that allowed me to play a few shots.

"I am going to keep working hard and doing my thing. I have managed to score a few runs but I could have bowled a bit better.

"I had a back spasm -- that is because the hotel beds are soft but it was not going to affect me playing for England at Lord's."

England's run chase was reduced to 20 overs giving them a taste of things to come when they line up for the Twenty20 Stanford Challenge in Antigua in November.

Pietersen said: "I don't know how many shots we would have played if we were playing for half a million bucks each."

### CRICINFO, undated VVS Laxman, the Deccan Chargers captain, has said that it was a "collective failure" that resulted in the franchise finishing last during the

# Holding calls it a 'farce'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The millions offered by Antiguabased billionaire Allen Stanford may have won over the West Indies and England boards, but Michael Holding, the former West Indies fast bowler, has taken a contrarian stand, saying Twenty20 games won't help revive cricket in the Caribbean. It marks a sharp turnaround from his statements in May, when he enthusiastically backed Stanford's plans. "I'm not interested in being involved with Mr Stanford because I do not think Mr Stanford is telling the people what he's really about," Holding told the Daily Mail.

The England team, as well as domestic Twenty20 champions week-long Stanford Super Series from October 25 to November 1 Stanford has on board a host of West Indian greats, including Garry Sobers and Viv Richards, but Holding said he won't be present for the series. "I am not going to be involved in a farce," he said. "He is telling people in the Caribbean that he wants to revive West Indian cricket but how is a week of Twenty20 cricket in Antigua going

to do that?" In May, Holding had joined the board of the Stanford 20/20, the domestic Twenty20 tournament in the region, calling Stanford's programme "amazing and comprehensive" and one that "encompasses funding for territorial devel-

In this latest interview, he clarified his change of heart. "If what he started to do initially had been carried on, it would have benefited West Indies cricket because he was involved in the development of the game in various islands and

donated money to them to improve their infrastructure," he said. "That is when I was involved but now [that] Stanford has got into bed with the ECB he doesn't need to do that anymore so he has abandoned it. He wants to promote himself and his companies, that's all. If people can't see that then I can't help them, it's their problem."

Holding said he doesn't like the Twenty20 format. "I don't think it is good for the game. Okay, it's entertainment, but cricket is what made me what I am. Cricket gave me the lifestyle I have and cricket sent my children to school so I am interested in what is best for it, not just the entertainment value.

"It has its place but it will be bad unless those in charge manage it properly and I do not think they can because they are blinded by money," he said. "I can see Test Middlesex, will be involved in the cricket dying because of this. I am not saying how many years that will take but if I was a young cricketer now I would want to play Twenty20 because of all the money. Why would I want to play Test cricket? And that is very unhealthy."

Stanford himself has maintained that Twenty20, and not Test cricket, will attract youngsters and bring in revenue for players. However, while stating he would try to recover his investment in the Stanford 20/20 from the television rights, he maintained profits would year. go to the West Indies Cricket Board. In June, Stanford, who had stopped his funding to regional boards over their lack of accountability, resumed giving 15,000 dollars to each board every month.

Earlier in the year, Holding had quit the ICC's cricket committee after its decision to change the result of the 2006 Oval Test between England and Pakistan from a Pakistan forfeit to a draw. "I will never get involved with any cricket committee or cricket board again

"Never. I've had enough and needed to move on. In my opinion Pakistan and Inzamamul Haq did the wrong thing in that match and do not see why that result should have been changed for politica expediency."

Siraji and Samad Yussif were also limping.

admitted that going ahead, Abahani were caught for relaxing a bit. "We dominated till scoring but Mohammedan equally fought

Batting

"Even in good conditions where felt like other guys were able to play their shots quite comfortably and hit down the ground and drive and pull well, I still felt like I was struggling for timing a fair bit," said Hussey, who made his one-day international debut in 2004 and played his first Test the following

back foot and think 'I should have pulled that ball' but I hadn't seen it quick enough or got into the right position quick enough."

85 runs in the first one-day match against Bangladesh on Saturday. "It feels good but there's always

# Flintoff makes it 4-0

Cricket

AFP, London

SPORT

Andrew Flintoff starred with bat and ball as England won the fourth one-day international against South Africa by seven wickets at Lord's on Sunday.

England, set a revised target of 137 to win off 20 overs after rain disrupted the South African innings of 183 for six in 32.1 overs, made it with 14 balls to spare with Kevin Pietersen making 40, and Owais Shah 44 not out. Flintoff came in and smashed a

rapid 31 off 12 deliveries to add to his three for 21 with the ball. Pietersen was out with 44 still

wanted but he and Shah had upped the tempo of England's run chase by hitting a Jacques Kallis over for

The England captain eventually holed out in the deep after hitting five fours and a six before Flintoff came in and took the game away from South Africa and give England a 4-0 lead in the series.

Pietersen said: "The recalculation probably worked in our favour but we batted really well. But I asked the boys to do a job and they have done it today. Winning becomes a habit and when you start winning game after game after game you learn how to win.

Powell sizzles

Recently-crowned women's 100m

champion Shelly-Ann Fraser of

Jamaica was beaten at the IAAF

Grand Prix here on Sunday by

Lauryn Williams while compatriot

Asafa Powell won the men's event

11.24 in beating Fraser, who man-

aged 11.29, and then added the

the meeting was Britain's Christine

Ohurougu, the country's only

athletics gold medallist in Beijing,

who easily won her 400m race in

her compatriot Phillipe Idowu, the

silver medallist in the men's triple

jump in Beijing who completely

messed up this competition at

He could only manage fourth

Powell's 9.87sec was hardly a

poor time but it was well outside

the world record of 9.69sec held by

compatriot Usain Bolt, who won

the 100m, 200m and 4x100m relay

American Tyson Gay won the

200m race in 20.26sec ahead of

compatriot Wallace Spearmon but

he was well outside Bolt's world

Premier League (IPL) in 2007-08

"Afridi has no team ethics.

Speaking negatively about the

team in public, let alone the cap-

tain, is just not on," Laxman told

cricketnext.com. "Being an experi-

enced cricketer, he should not be

questioning the way the team

functions. I am really shocked to

say the least. He should know that it

was a collective failure because he

was part of the team. It is unfortu-

nate that he chose to blame the

Laxman was reacting to Afridi's

statement that Adam Gilchrist

would have been a better choice to

lead the side than Laxman. "At

times Laxman lost the plot on the

field," Afridi told Geo News.

"Twenty20 cricket is not his forte.

Adam is more comfortable in this

most successful players for us

along with Rohit Sharma. He

played some really good innings

and his input was very good at

times on the field. If they do

appoint Adam as captain I think he

would be a better choice than

formed poorly during the IPL.

Afridi was one of the most high-

profile failures, scoring only 81

runs in ten innings. Laxman sus-

tained an injury after six games, in

which he scored 155 runs, and

Gilchrist took over as captain. The

Deccan Chargers won only two out

told Afridi that a captain can only

be as good as the team and to

blame only me is totally out of

place," Laxman said. "The truth is

that the team did not perform to its

potential. Every player should take

the blame for it and try and come-

back strongly in the next edition

instead of blaming each other."

"Probably it is time someone

of 14 games in the league.

Both Laxman and Afridi per-

"Gilchrist was one of the two

captain for it."

type of cricket.

Laxman.

'Afridi has no

team ethics'

at Olympics in China.

record of 19.30sec.

place with 16.42m, far from his best

performance in the world this year

Ohurougu did much better than

However the main attraction of

200m race, winning in 22.65sec.

American Williams clocked

in the rain

AFP, Gateshed

in 9.87sec.

Gateshead.

of 17.58sec.

best cricket of his career."

In the gathering gloom Shah who started off slowly paced his innings to perfection to get England home whilst Flintoff seemingly unaffected by the light hit the South African bowling to all

Pietersen added: "I know Owais would come good. He proved what a good player he is. He delivered today and played some fantastic

Kallis said: "The dressing room is down -- we pride ourselves on our results. But there are some positives to take out today, we are learning from our mistakes and we have some young players learning about international cricket.

"Flintoff has been unbelievable. He has proved he is a good player and he adds balance to the England

side. He is a world class performer." Herschelle Gibbs, 34 and no longer in the Test side, showed he remains a force in one-da international cricket with his 36th one-day half century after South Africa were put into bat in gloomy conditions by Pietersen.

The opener was eyeing a 21st one-day century when he was bowled off his pads by Stuart Broad having faced 75 balls and hit five fours for his 74.

For England Andrew Flintoff took three for 21 from seven overs

"Andrew is playing some of the before rain interrupted the innings for a second time.

Gibbs and Hashim Amla put on 66 for the first wicket with Amla accelerating after the rain break when he tucked into Steve Harmison and took four fours of the quick bowler in one over.

At this stage the South Africans were going at more than six an over but Amla's innings was cut short when he was run out by Owais Shah.

Pietersen's bowlers were not firing on all cylinders as they had at Trent Bridge when South Africa were bundled out for 83 and Harmison was taken out of the attack after conceding 35 runs in four overs but Flintoffwas reliable as ever.

, A 5-0 whitewash of the South Africans, the final match is in Cardiff on Wednesday, would take England to second in the ICC oneday world rankings behind Australia.

SCOREBOARD

on Sunday:

SOUTHAFRICA Gibbs b Broad AmlarunouT Kallis ct Prior b Flintoff De Villiers ct Flintoff b Patel Duminy ct Bell b Flintoff Boucher not out

Botha not out Extras: (lb-11, w-7)

Total: (For 6 wkts in 32.1 overs) 183 Did not bat: Morkel, Steyn, Nel Fall of wickets: 1-66, 2-75, 3-113, 4-155, 5-158, 6-179. Bowler Anderson Broad Harmison Flintoff

26 Collingwood 0 34 1 Patel **ENGLAND** Bell c Boucher b Morkel Prior c Boucher b Steyn Shah not out Pietersen c Amla b Botha

Extras: (b-2, w-7) Total: (For 3 wkts in 17.4 overs) 137 Did not bat: Collingwood, Patel, Wright, Broad, Harmison,

Flintoff not out

Scoreboard at close of the fourth one-day international between England and South Africa at Lord's

Philander ct Anderson b Flintoff 10

Anderson. Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-19, 3-93. Bowler Steyn 0 11 0 Morkel Philander Kallis 0 25 1 Botha Result: England won by seven

wickets Man-of-the-match: Andrew Flintoff. Umpires: Simon Taufel (AUS) and

Mark Benson (ENG) Toss: England

themselves mentally and physically

ahead of a schedule that has little

England squads will be given a break

"Those players involved in both

respite over the next 12 months.

# England stars given rest

Cricket

AFP, London

England captain Kevin Pietersen and all-rounder Andrew Flintoff are among seven players who have been made unavailable to their counties for the rest of the English domestic season.

England coach Peter Moores confirmed Hampshire batsman Pietersen and Lancashire star Flintoff will be rested during September following the final oneday international against South

Africa at Cardiff on Wednesday. James Anderson, Ian Bell, Stuart

TAVIVA

POWELL

ATESHEA

Asafa Powell of Jamaica on his way to winning the 100 metres sprint gold at

4 Geolog-

periods

5 Get more

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zines

6 Sobers

7 Verve

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the IAAF Grand Prix in Gateshead on Sunday.

42 Go bad

43 Acapulco

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17 Attack

Broad, Paul Collingwood and Ryan Sidebottom are the other five centrally contracted players who will recharge their batteries ahead of England's next competitive action the Stanford Super Series in late

schedule and it's important for those players involved in both the Test and ODI squads to be rested ahead of what promises to be a hectic winter," Moores said.

"With the postponement of the ICC Champions Trophy an invaluable break in the international schedule has emerged during September and it is important the

from cricket but they will continue a comprehensive conditioning programme in preparation for the "It has been a gruelling summer Stanford Super Series and the ensuingtour of India." Durham fast bowler Steve Harmison is among those England players who are free to play for their counties over the coming weeks. Harmison, who made his international comeback in August, is joined by Tim Ambrose, Ravi Bopara, Samit Patel, Monty Panesar, Matt Prior, Owais Shah, Andrew players use that interval to refresh Strauss, Graeme Swann, Luke Wright. Moores added: "We recognise that Stephen Harmison only featured in one Test match prior to

> joining England's ODI squad and as a result he will join Durham for the rest of the first-class season. 'Alastair Cook has not featured in the current NatWest Series and after working hard on his one-day game during recent weeks he is available for Essex's NatWest Pro40

match this Sunday and a Twenty20 floodlit challenge match on Friday." PLAYER AVAILABILITY

UNAVAILABLE FOR REST OF SEASON: Kevin Pietersen, James Anderson, Ian Bell, Stuart Broad, Paul Collingwood, Alastair Cook (except a Pro40 fixture and T20 floodlit challenge), Andrew Flintoff, Ryan Sidebottom (due to

injury). AVAILABLE FOR REST OF SEASON: Tim Ambrose, Ravi Bopara, Stephen Harmison, Samit Patel, Monty Panesar, Matt Prior, Owais Shah, Andrew Strauss, Graeme Swann, Luke Wright.

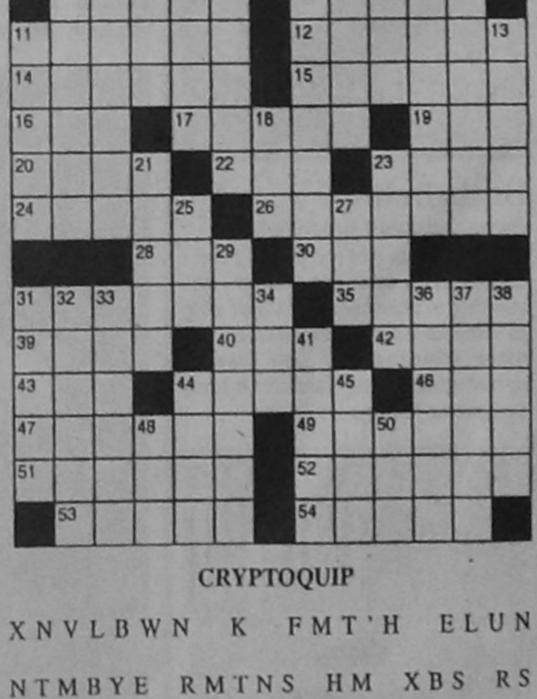
## A-Rod, R-Fed

**FROM PAGE 17** teenaged challenger for the second time in as many meetings, both coming at majors.

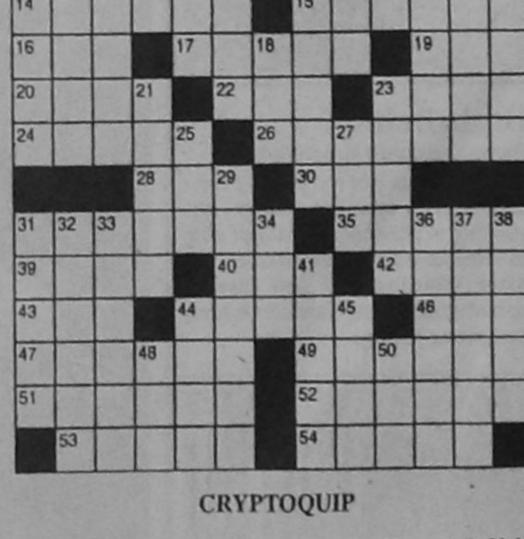
At Wimbledon, Wozniacki got off to a fast start before being pegged back by the 23-year-old seed. "In the first set she played quite solid, putting all these balls back.

She didn't make any errors, I was the one who was all over the place," Jankovic said. She plays in the quarterfinals

against Sybille Bammer, who beat former Wimbledon finalist Marion Bartoli 7-6 (7-3), 0-6, 6-4.



Yesterday's Cryptoquip: INSTEAD OF SOLVING THESE HARD LOGIC PROBLEMS NOW, WE CHOSE TO SAVE THEM FOR A BRAINY DAY.



OLUMJKHN TBHW, K YBNWW K'R WHILCCNF OMI VLWENIW.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: K equals I

### inaugural season of the Indian for the rest of my life," he said and said he was "really shocked" that teammate Shahid Afridi criticised his performance in public.

and due to injuries, my team could not really give their best." Abahani captain Nazrul Islam

back," he said.

"I'd play a defensive shot off the Hussey who has adjusted his

## Arman does it

"The accidental goal let us down

FROM PAGE 17

technique under the eye of Western Australia coach Tom Moody, scored

going to be times when I'm going to battle, I'm sure," he said.