

BCCI wins big in TV deal

PTI, Melbourne

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will be the biggest gainer as it is windfall time for the three founding members of Champions Twenty20 League after inking the massive US\$ 975 million television rights deal with ESPN-STAR, with the Indian board hogging 50 per cent of the amount.

According to media reports here, the three founding member boards -- BCCI, Cricket Australia and Cricket South Africa -- will share the 10-year deal amount with India getting half of it and CA and CSA pocketing 25 per cent each.

"Cricket Australia will earn about 25 per cent of the figure, as will Cricket South Africa, while the game's major power-broker -- the Board of Control for Cricket in India -- takes the remaining half," a report in Sydney Morning Herald said.

The Champions Twenty20 League deal is the second biggest rights agreement this year after the US\$ 1 billion deal for 10 years for the outstandingly successful Indian Premier League.

But the eight-day global Twenty20 league, which will be held from December 3 to 10, will become the highest value cricket tournament on a per game basis ever scheduled.

Eight teams, winners and runners-up of domestic Twenty20 competitions in India, Australia and South Africa, plus winners of 2008 Twenty20 championships from Pakistan and England have been invited to compete in the inaugural edition.

Next year, 12 teams will compete and the tournament will extend to 16 days. Teams will vie for \$6 million in prize money, with half awarded to the winner and a minimum \$250,000 to each participant.

India is expected to stage this year's tournament while venues in the United Arab Emirates are vying for hosting rights for next year and beyond.

CSA's tribute to winners

INTERNET, undated

Cricket South Africa paid tribute to ICC Test Player of the year Dale Steyn and the three other Proteas who featured prominently at the ICC Awards on Wednesday in Dubai.

Captain Graeme Smith was named as captain of the ICC's World Test XI for last season, which also includes Dale Steyn and Jacques Kallis. Steyn was named as Test Player of the Year, and Herschelle Gibbs was selected for the World ODI XI.

CSA chief executive Gerald Majola said: "The honours bestowed on these Proteas are very well-deserved and South African cricket salutes them."

"Graeme's selection as captain of the ICC's World Test XI for last season is a remarkable achievement for such a young player."

"This shows that he has certainly come of age as a world-class captain, and this bodes well for the future of South African cricket."

"Dale has emerged as one of the world's most exciting fast bowlers and this award as Test Player of the Year most deservedly comes on top of CSA naming him as Mutual & Federal Player of the Year for 2007-08."

"It is also great to see veterans Jacques and Herschelle still being rated among the best in the world."

"All these awards follow on from the Proteas' most successful season since unity and we look forward to the continuation of this progress going into the new season."

Captaincy

FROM PAGE 17 recovered from an ankle injury and was looking forward to the home series against Australia.

"In absence of any cricket in the entire month of September, we got time to work on our fitness. My ankle is perfect now and by the time we play against Australia, all other players would also be in the peak of their fitness level," he said.

Sachin still

FROM PAGE 17 Gilchrist was also against rushing Dhoni into the Test captain's job even though he felt it was just a matter of time before the star stumper takes over the reins from Anil Kumble.

"Well, his time will come I believe," Gilchrist said.

"There is no need to rush him in. I'm sure it's just a matter of time. He looks to me like the top character who can handle both Test and one-day captaincy, and the wicketkeeping and batting roles and the many, many sponsors he has," Gilchrist quipped.

Though no more part of the Australian squad, Gilchrist is not immune to issues affecting the Aussies and he sounded equally worried about the uncertainty over Andrew Symonds' fate.

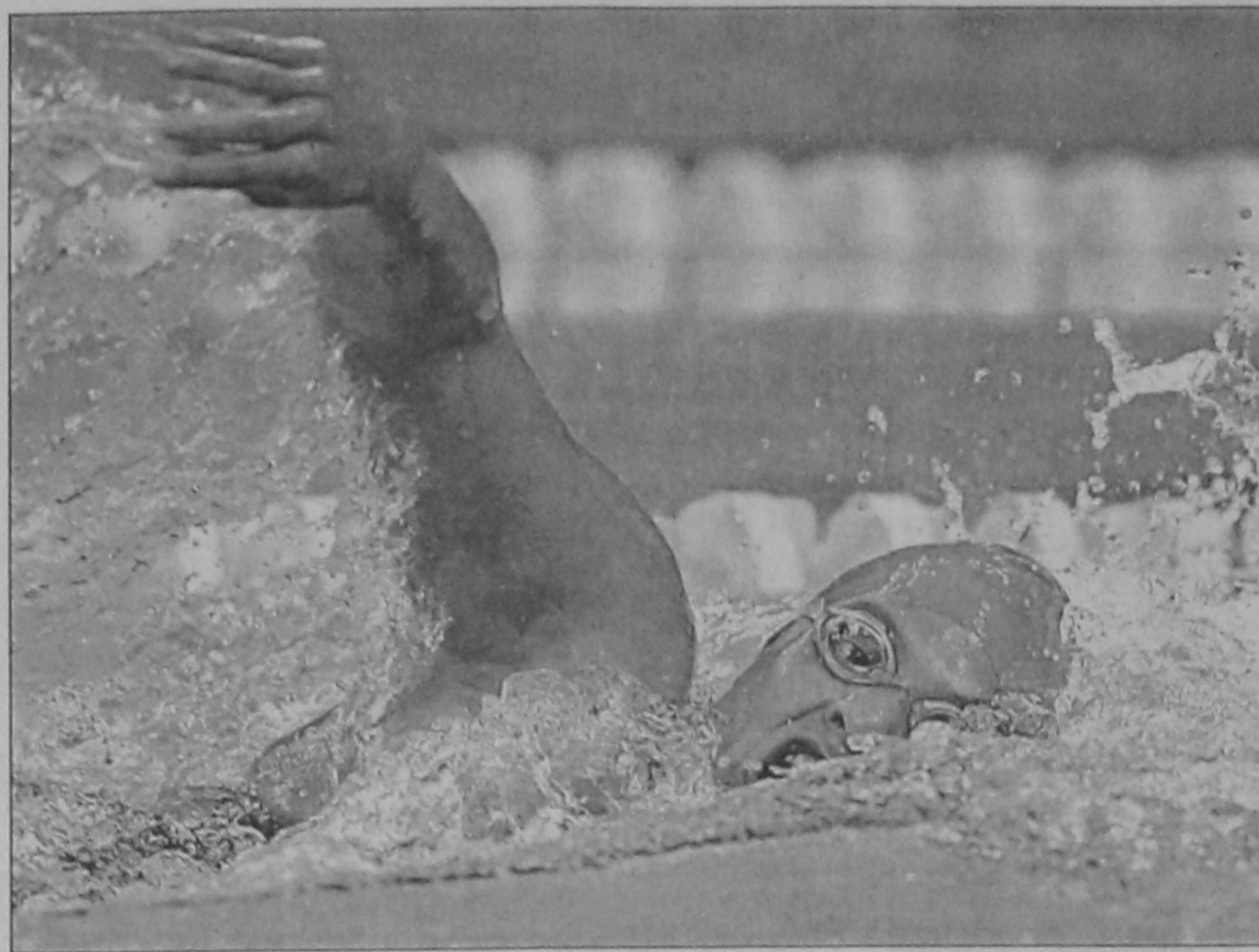
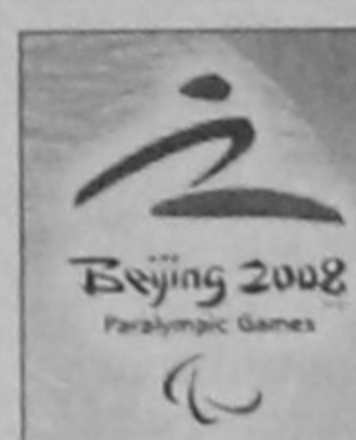


PHOTO: AFP

Natalie Du Toit of South Africa swims on way to win the women's 400m freestyle gold in the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games at the National Aquatics Centre yesterday. Du Toit won with a new world record of 4:23.81.

Fourth gold for Du Toit

AFP, Beijing



China pulled away from its Paralympic rivals Friday as the host nation's medal tally soared over 100, while South African

swimming sensation Natalie du Toit grabbed her fourth gold.

Away from the sporting arena, International Paralympic chiefs were forced to defend the controversial banning of an Irish athlete and speak out against the doping problems in powerlifting.

China's total of 109 medals means it has a bigger haul in six days of competition than it won during the whole of last month's Olympics, when it collected exactly 100.

Its 37 golds include 17 in athletics and eight in table tennis, elevating China well clear of second-placed Britain, on 33 golds and an overall total of 69.

"The Chinese athletes are doing very well and there is high morale among all the athletes from China and now they are number one in the medal tally," said Wang Wei, the vice-president of organising committee BOCOG.

But he added that promoting the Paralympic movement and the cause of people with disabilities in China was more important than medals.

In the pool, du Toit added the

women's 400 metres freestyle title to the golds she has already won in the 100m butterfly, 100m freestyle and 200m individual medley events.

Du Toit destroyed the field, finishing almost 16 seconds ahead of Canada's Stephanie Dixon in a time of 4 mins 23.81 secs.

The 24-year-old, who knocked 0.15secs off her own world record, said: "It was a good race. I gave everything."

Du Toit said the 50m freestyle on Sunday would likely be her toughest task.

"It's going to be a head-down-and-go race. Anything can happen but I'm looking forward to it, it's a great challenge."

Du Toit, who finished 16th in the 10 kilometre marathon swim in the Olympics last month, is aiming for two more wins to match her gold tally at the 2004 Athens Paralympics.

She is one of only two Paralympians who also competed at the Beijing Olympics, along with Polish teenager Natalia Partyka who won table tennis gold in her class on Wednesday.

At the "Bird's Nest" National Stadium earlier Friday, the women's 5000m wheelchair race was repeated after the first run Monday saw a huge pile-up less than 100 metres from the finishing line.

Medals were handed out for the first race but subsequently withdrawn. In the re-run, the same three athletes finished in the medal positions but in a different order.

Meanwhile, International Paralympic Committee medical and scientific director Peter Van de Vliet insisted that classification rules were transparent and aimed at fair competition.

The comments followed a ruling that Irish footballer Derek Malone's cerebral palsy condition was not severe enough, apparently because his condition had improved due to his fitness work ahead of the Games.

"As far as I know all the assessments that have been done so far during these Games have been done in compliance with the actual rules," Van de Vliet said.

He also vowed to continue the drive to root out doping of drug cheats following the expulsions of three weightlifters.

The controversies have taken some of the gloss off what otherwise was a celebration of disabled sports, led by the performances of du Toit, fellow South African Oscar "Blade Runner" Pistorius and the dominant Chinese.

A total of 641 doping tests had been carried out at the Games, both in and out of competition, by the end of Thursday.

At the Athens Games, a total of 680 doping tests were conducted, resulting in 10 violations.

More than 4,000 competitors from nearly 150 countries and regions are battling for 472 gold medals in 20 sports at the Paralympics.

Another twist in WICB row

CRICINFO, undated

The row between the West Indies Cricket Board and its sponsors, Digicel, took another twist on Thursday with a proposal from the company to settle its dispute with the board.

In August, Digicel filed an injunction in the High Court in London seeking to have the WICB withdraw all approval for the Stanford Super Series which, it claimed, encroached its "exclusive sponsorship rights". The move came in the light of rumours that Stanford was close to signing Cable and Wireless (Digicel's competitor and a former sponsor of the West Indies team) as a sponsor for the series.

The court put the matter to arbitration, and the results of this are due in October. However, in a statement sent to Cricinfo, Digicel said it proposed a "compromise solution" which would involve the waiver of a considerable number of legal and commercial rights owned by Digicel in return for a new and exclusive sponsorship agreement with the WICB.

The conditions of the offer are that the Stanford side in the 20/20 for 20 match against England on November 1 wear official West Indies kit with Digicel branding; that no telecommunications company be involved in the event; and that Digicel's costs be paid for by the board.

While this might appear one-sided, Digicel claims that in return it will be "foregoing a large number of valuable legal rights and entitlements including broadcast rights, exclusively branded pitch mats, sight screens, perimeter boards, promotional opportunities, advertising, content rights and various other avenues for commercial use that it currently owns by virtue of its sole and exclusive sponsorship agreement with the WICB".

The statement concludes: "Digicel would call upon both the WICB and Stanford to engage constructively on this matter and to put cricket in the West Indies first. Digicel's compromise solution is a very credible alternative and provides something for every party concerned."

Insiders believe that the WICB might have little option but to agree to the bulk of the demands, because without the board's backing, the series could be deemed unofficial which, given the precedent set with the ICL in India, would create numerous issues for the players involved.

As far as the ECB are concerned, however, the matches were approved by the ICC back in June, and so they have no doubts about their status. An ECB spokesman told Cricinfo that the other details were solely an issue for the WICB.

Laila becomes a mother

AFP, Los Angeles

Laila Ali, daughter of boxing legend Muhammad Ali and a champion fighter in her own right, has welcomed her first child with husband Curtis Conway, she announced Thursday on her website.

Curtis Muhammad Conway was born on August 26 and weighed in at 6.8 pounds.

"Mama and baby are resting!" said Ali, who owns a ring record of 24-0 with 21 knockouts and is considered the world's top female boxer.

The 30-year-old has also become a television celebrity, as a contestant on "Dancing with the Stars" and host of "American Gladiator".

Ali married Conway, a retired National Football League player who is seven years her senior, in July 2007.

Her 66-year-old father, perhaps the best known athlete in the world, was banished from boxing for refusing induction into the US Army to fight in Vietnam.

He later became a legend for humanitarian work, which he has continued despite battling Parkinson's disease.

Shiv celebrates with runs

AFP, London

West Indies batsman Shivnarine Chanderpaul celebrated his award as the ICC Player of the Year by hitting 93 for Durham in a County Championship first division clash with Somerset at Taunton.

After bowling out fellow title hopefuls Somerset for just 224, Durham will resume Friday's final day of the rain-affected match on 265 for three with Michael di Venuto, who shared a 174-run stand with Chanderpaul, still at the crease on 131 not out.

Charl Willoughby was the only home bowler to get any real joy, accounting for Chanderpaul, to return figures of two for 58 off 28 hard-working overs.

Relegation-haunted Surrey are 171 for seven in response to Hampshire's 480 for eight declared at The Oval.

Scott Newman hit 58 at the top of the order but only captain Mark Ramprakash, with 55 not out, offered support.

Real, Barca search for win

AFP, Madrid



Real Madrid are 40 million euros better off after selling Robinho to Manchester City, but his loss leaves the Spanish champions short of firepower in their quest for a third successive title.

Real coach Bernd Schuster was so concerned by the Brazilian's exit that he made two last-ditch offers for Valencia striker David Villa, top scorer at Euro 2008, before the transfer window shut but the player decided to stay put.

"I was really happy when Valencia rejected the offer because it was a true gesture of confidence and I felt really wanted," said Villa.

"They preferred me to stay than to take all that money."

After failing to sign Cristiano Ronaldo from Manchester United it represented another huge setback for Real but they must overcome it ahead of Sunday's home match against newcomers Numancia.

Real are looking to register their first points of the season after an opening 2-1 defeat at Deportivo La Coruna a fortnight ago.

Numancia defeated Barcelona 1-0 in their opening fixture and are targeting a second giant killing on their return to the top flight.

Valencia started with a 3-0 victory over Real Mallorca and new coach Unai Emery returns to his

old club Almeria on Sunday hoping to build on the good start.

Emery spent two seasons at Almeria winning promotion and guiding them to eighth in the table last season - the highest ever finish in the club's history - before jumping ship to Valencia in the summer.

Emery has been given an early season headache with the news that David Silva, courted by Manchester United in the summer, could be out for out for two to three months due to surgery on his left ankle.

Barcelona manager Pep Guardiola had a nightmare start to his regime with a 1-0 reverse at Numancia that mirrored the problems of last season.

Guardiola stuck with the 4-3-3 system - with French international Thierry Henry again on the left wing - and the team again looked out of sorts.

"We were too desperate to win and maybe that let us down," explained Brazilian right back Daniel Alves.

FIXTURES

Saturday
Valladolid v Atletico Madrid, Barcelona v Racing Santander (1900 GMT), Sevilla v Sporting Gijon (2100 GMT)
Sunday
(1600 GMT unless stated)
Malaga v Athletic Bilbao, Recreativo v Espanyol, Getafe v Real Betis, Villarreal v Deportivo La Coruna, Real Mallorca v Osasuna, Real Madrid v Numancia (1800 GMT), Almeria v Valencia (2000 GMT)

Podolski has to wait

AFP, Berlin



Bayern Munich coach Jurgen Klinsmann has told restless forward Lukas Podolski his frustrating stay on the bench will continue

for the German giants' trip to Cologne on Saturday.

Despite scoring two goals for Germany last weekend in a World Cup qualifier, Podolski, 23, remains third-choice striker at Bayern behind Miroslav Klose, who hit a hat-trick against Finland on Wednesday, and Italian Luca Toni.

"Lukas is still the challenger to our two strikers and he must show he is better than them," said Klinsmann.

"That can be a long-term process - over several months or years even."

With Real Madrid, Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur all expressing an interest, it would be no surprise if Podolski leaves Bayern when the transfer window re-opens in January.

Having been told to 'stop whining' about his situation by Bayern manager Uli Hoeness, Podolski has made no secret of his desire to return to his old club Cologne and

will be itching for a chance to impress his potential employers.

"That is not a pleasant role for Lukas, he can't be content. And if I were him, I would also be unhappy," added Klinsmann.

With some of Europe's biggest clubs monitoring the situation, Bayern can expect some big bids for Podolski who has scored 30 goals for Germany.

"It is an honour other clubs are interested in signing our players; whether they sign him is another question," Klinsmann added.

Defending champions Bayern are up to seventh in the table and need to beat Cologne to threaten the league leaders.

Having picked up their first Bundesliga win at Karlsruhe since last season's promotion, Cologne have been boosted by seeing cap-

FIXTURES

Saturday
Werder Bremen v Energie Cottbus, Hamburg v Bayer Leverkusen, Hertha Berlin v VfL Wolfsburg, Borussia Dortmund v Schalke 04, Hoffenheim v VfB Stuttgart, Cologne v Bayern Munich
Sunday
Hanover 96 v Borussia M'gladbach, VfL Bochum v Arminia Bielefeld

"It is better to make these mistakes now rather than in two months."

Barcelona are at home - where they are far stronger - against Racing Santander on Saturday looking for a first win of the new campaign.

Neighbours Espanyol got off to a winning start but the departures of Albert Riera to Liverpool and Javier Zabaleta to Manchester City could be felt later in the season.

Veteran Irish full back Steve Finnan has come in from Liverpool and could come into contention for Sunday's match at Recreativo Huelva.

Real Betis hope to parade their new signing Spanish international Sergio Garcia - a ten million euro capture from Real Zaragoza - in Sunday's trip to Getafe.

After crushing Malaga 4-0 in their league opener Atletico Madrid have had the honour of sitting top of the standings for the first time in four years and defend top spot when they travel to Valladolid on Saturday.

Argentine Ever Banega, part of his country's Olympic gold winning team, is hopeful of making his bow after joining from Valencia on a season-long loan.

"I am not going to rush things because I want to be in the best form possible," said Banega.

"However, I can't wait to make my debut in the Atletico shirt."

Elsewhere, Real Madrid's conquerors Deportivo face another title candidate on Sunday with a trip to Villarreal.

tain Umit Ozat finally leave hospital after he collapsed during a league match last month.

The 31-year-old is desperate to continue playing despite his medical drama caused by inflammation of the heart muscle and he needs six weeks complete rest before he will find out if he can play again.

League leaders Schalke 04 face a tough test at neighbours Borussia Dortmund on Saturday who are third in the table.

Schalke's coach Fred Ruten will give a Bundesliga debut to Dutch midfielder Jefferson Farfan, who has recovered from a shoulder injury, while goalkeeper Manuel Neuer could play his first game since breaking his metatarsal in July.

Third-placed Hamburg are expected to give a debut to Brazilian midfielder Thiago Neves at Bayer Leverkusen, who are challenging in fourth.

Newly-promoted Hoffenheim will be looking to bounce back from last week's 5-2 defeat against Bayer Leverkusen when they face VfB Stuttgart with Germany striker Mario Gomez rediscovering his form.

Champions League side Werder Bremen are hunting their first win of the season when they play strugglers Energie Cottbus on Saturday, the same day mid-table Wolfsburg and Hertha Berlin face off.

What could've been!

AFP, Karachi



Pakistan pondered another low-point for the country's cricketing fortunes on Friday, when the shelled Champions Trophy had been due to kick off.

Captain Shoaib Malik said the players were "very disappointed" at last month's setback when the high-profile International Cricket Council (ICC) tournament was postponed over security fears.

Attempts to reschedule the Trophy for October 2009 are clashing with other series, leaving the event in doubt.

With ongoing security problems placing a question mark over future

tours here, Malik said Pakistan's reputation had been dealt a serious blow.

"As cricketers we are very disappointed," Malik told AFP. "I would rather say that disappointment is a very small word for the feeling we are going through and our cricket has badly suffered from the Trophy postponement."

The September 12-28 event for the top eight nations was put off after South Africa refused to tour and players from Australia, England and New Zealand also expressed reluctance to visit.

Malik said Pakistan needed to host the Trophy to prove itself as a safe venue for international cricket.

"The Pakistan government gave full security assurances and had the event took place with fans coming from abroad perceptions

and the image of our country would have changed," he said.

"We badly needed to host the Champions Trophy because it would have paved the way for more international cricket in Pakistan. We are now sitting idle with no activity and it's something which no player wanted."

Since the September 11 attacks in the United States in 2001, Pakistan has been a danger zone for foreign cricket teams. New Zealand returned from transit in Singapore after the attacks seven years ago.

The ensuing war in Afghanistan and rise of militancy in Pakistan forced authorities here to relocate two home series - against the West Indies and Australia -- to neutral venues after both teams refused to tour in 2002.

In May 2002, New Zealand were forced to cut short their tour after a suicide bomb blast outside their team hotel killed 14 people, including 11 French naval staff.

A measure of normality returned when South Africa and India toured Pakistan in the following two years, but both refused to play five-day Tests in troubled Karachi.

Australia, who have not toured Pakistan since 1998, sparked a cricket crisis in March this year when they refused to visit for a full tour over safety fears, giving other teams the cue to boycott the Champions Trophy.

Pakistan's efforts to arrange a gap-filling series also fell through as South Africa refused to host them for a one-day tri-series and attempts to invite Sri Lanka for five one-day matches failed to attract sponsors and TV interest.

Despite the bleak scenario, a Pakistan Cricket Board spokesman hoped things will get better. Pakistan hosts India for three Tests and five one-day matches early next year.

"It is a passing phase and although things don't look rosy we hope that with the home series against India at the turn of the year will kick off a busy schedule for the team."

"We keep our fingers crossed for a hectic next year."

Pakistan cricket has been hit by a series of controversies in recent years including the 2006 forfeited Test in England and doping scandals surrounding Shoaib Akhtar and Mohammad Asif.

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

As Bryce McGain strolled towards Cricket Australia's Melbourne headquarters on Friday it was hard to know who was more excited about his Test call-up, the legspinner himself or his eight-year-old son Liam. McGain was smiling but suitably restrained; Liam was powering along the footpath and replicating his father's legbreak action, with an extra couple of flourishes.

There will be nothing imaginary about McGain's task next month when he is almost certain to make his Test debut in India at 36. But for the time being, day-to-day life continues and he was unable to speak to the media until after he had picked up Liam from school. It had already been a big day after an early morning phone call told McGain he was a chance for a baggy green.

"It was around breakfast time, Liam was smiling and so excited," McGain said. "We hugged and jumped around a bit in the lounge room. I put the cornflakes and toast on hold and said we're going out to a cafe to celebrate."

McGain was still recovering from the flight home from India, having picked up three wickets in an Australia A match against India A in Bangalore, where the first Test will take place from October 9. He also collected a minor shoulder problem, although he is certain it will not keep him from touring with the senior squad.

"It was good bowling at Bangalore and understanding the conditions," McGain said. "I certainly went over there with a bit of a plan after talking to Shane Warne before I went over and it seemed to be quite successful."

"It was a bit of a shame just getting a bit of a (shoulder) niggle but I'll be over that and bowling again by the end of the week. I'm looking forward to putting those plans in play hopefully in the first Test."

McGain will speak to Warne again before departing on September 21, although he already knows that India's batsmen will aim to pound him into submission. Seventeen overs for Australia A is limited preparation but with two warm-up games before the first

Test and 15 years of club cricket under his belt, McGain is confident he can step up.

"There was no mistaking that in the A game they went out to have a crack at all the spinners and really went aggressively at every ball I bowled," he said. "It was good to put them quickly on the back foot



BRYCE MCGAIN

by getting three early wickets, three of the first four wickets in the game. Hopefully that'll continue when I play for Australia."

He might not have meant to use the word "when", although it is hard to see what will keep him from a Test spot in a squad that also includes the Tasmanian offspinner Jason Krejza. One of the surprises in Australia's selection was the omission of the left-arm wrist-spinner

Hantuchova, Schnyder in last four

AFP, Nusa Dua

Top seed Daniela Hantuchova battled past Taiwan's Chan Yung-Jan 7-6, 4-6, 6-2 to join Nadia Petrova and Patty Schnyder in the Bali Open semi-finals on Friday.

Slovakia's Hantuchova, last year's runner-up, negotiated an opening set littered with eight breaks of serve and saved two set points before taking the lead on tie-break