

Spotakova sets WR in javelin

AFP, Stuttgart

Olympic champion Barbora Spotakova of the Czech Republic set a new world javelin record with a throw of 72.28m here at the IAAF World Athletics Final on Saturday.

The reigning world and Olympic champion smashed the old record by 58cms as she broke the previous mark of 71.70m set by Cuba's Osleidys Menendez at the 2005 World Athletics Championships in Helsinki.

Spotakova, whose personal best at the beginning of season was 67.12m, broke the European record with a throw of 71.42m at last month's Beijing Olympic Games with her sixth and last attempt.

It gave her an Olympic gold medal and saw her beat Russian Maria Abakumova who had also broken the continental mark with a throw of 70.78m just minutes earlier.

'Advantage with India'

PTI, New Delhi

With the Australian attack losing the venom of the recent past and two rookie spinners in the visiting squad, India has a bright chance to avenge their 2004 series loss in next month's Test series, feels former Sri Lanka coach Dav Whatmore.

Whatmore, now director (cricket operations) of the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore said Anil Kumble's boys should capitalise on the inexperienced Australian bowling to beat the world champions.

"I think in the series they (India) are fairly fortunate. There is no Warne, no McGrath (in the Australian squad), that is over 1000 wickets taken out. India have got advantage. Generally, speaking you would need everyone firing for Australia to win a Test match," he said.

"The attack that's coming over is not as experienced as what has been. They (India) will enjoy that, they will capitalise on that, get enough runs, protect and bowl the opposition out twice," the Australian told cricketnirvana.com.

He, though, had a word of caution and said India would do well if they allow their pace spearhead Brett Lee and captain Ricky Ponting little success.

"(It) is an inexperienced side coming over. But even in this inexperienced team there are a couple of match-winners in Lee and Ponting. We cannot overlook that."

"We can never write Ponting off. He has enough experience in the subcontinent. He has played enough in Pakistan, India, as well as Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in recent times. He has enough experience here to come along and start to play the ball not coming onto the bat as much as these guys like," said the 1996 World Cup winning coach.

PCB invites WI for two Tests

CRICINFO, undated

Pakistan have "formally invited" West Indies to play two Tests in November in another attempt to fill the gap created by the postponement of the Champions Trophy.

"We have formally invited the West Indies board to send their team to play two Tests in Pakistan immediately after the three-match one-day series ends in Abu Dhabi," Shafiqat Nagmi, the PCB's chief operating officer, told PTI. "We are hopeful West Indies will respond positively or else this year we just have the one-day series in Abu Dhabi and a Twenty20 four-nation event in Toronto in October."

The Pakistan board had initially proposed a tri-series in South Africa but the plan fell through after Cricket South Africa said their players were fatigued following a long tour of England. They then tried to set up an ODI series against Sri Lanka but had received "ridiculously low figures" for the television rights.

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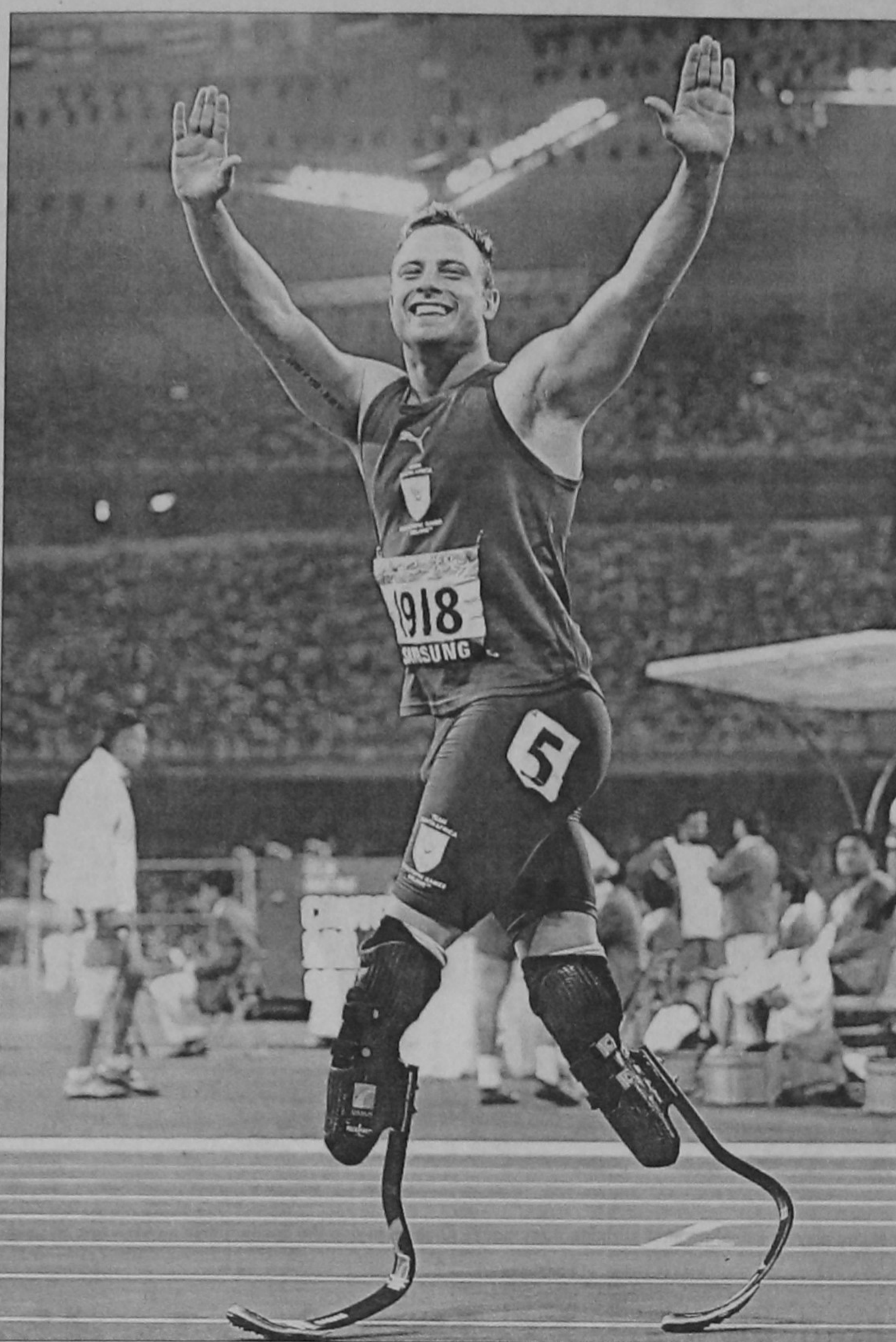
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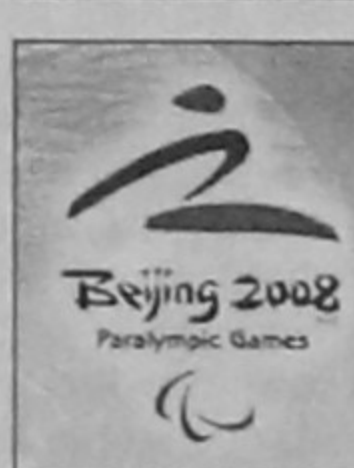
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Oscar Pistorius of South Africa celebrates after winning the final of the men's 200 metre T44 classification event at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games on Saturday.

Pistorius wins 200m gold

AFP, Beijing



Oscar "Blade Runner" Pistorius won his second gold of the Paralympic Games as China stretched its lead at the top of the medals table.

And there was controversy as Iran abruptly withdrew from their men's wheelchair basketball quarterfinal with the United States complaining of a change in schedule.

Pistorius -- aiming for a sprint treble here -- was dominant down the home straight, finishing in 21.67secs, almost a second clear of Jim Bob Bizzell from the United States, with Britain's Ian Jones in third.

"This race is definitely going down as one of my best ever races. I've never run in front of a crowd this big and just the crowd, the athletes, it was an awesome race and I couldn't have hoped for anything better," he said.

The 21-year-old said he had been feeling a little unwell in the run-up to the final but that adrenaline saw him home.

"This is definitely one of the most amazing nights ever. It's really been a good memory."

Pistorius has just one race left,

the 400m, in which he is targeting a world record.

"I'm really looking forward to the 400m. If those two races, if it goes like that, then I'll be extremely happy," said the South African, the world record holder in his category in all three events.

Nicknamed after the carbon fibre blades he wears, Pistorius won a court battle to take part in the Olympics after proving himself a strong competitor against able-bodied athletes.

He eventually failed to qualify for the Beijing Olympics, blaming in part the distraction of his court battle, but he is targeting the London 2012 Games.

In the pool, Erin Popovich of the United States missed out on the chance to add to her clutch of four gold medals, losing to China's Huang Min in the women's 50m butterfly.

China had 48 golds and 129 medals in total Saturday evening -- boosted by 22 athletics golds and eight in table tennis -- with Britain on 37 golds and 80 medals overall.

Meanwhile, the Iranian wheelchair basketball team had been due to play the United States in a morning clash but forfeited the game.

A statement from the International Paralympic Committee said Iran had pulled out because they were unhappy with the draw and

schedule for the later rounds.

One potential semifinal opponent for Iran had been Israel.

But a member of the Iranian delegation told AFP: "The main reason for not participating is the change of competition time by the organisers" after the game was rescheduled to 9:00am from 11:15am.

Controversies have taken some of the gloss off what has otherwise been a celebration of disabled sports, led by the performances of South African Olympian Natalie du Toit, who has won four golds in the pool, and Pistorius.

So far four athletes, including three powerlifters, have been kicked out of the Games for doping offences.

And Irish sports chiefs Thursday announced that athlete Derek Malone had been banned from the Paralympics because authorities had deemed him not disabled enough.

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.

Hosts score 8 to reach final

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Hattricks from Mahbub and Jahangir gave Manikganj a fantastic 8-2 win over Tangail as they reached the final of the Dhaka Range Police Football League at the local police line ground yesterday.

Apart from their hattricks, Raju and Rafiq added one goal each.

But the game was in defending champions Tangail's grasp when Satyendra and Mahbub scored to give them a 2-0 lead.

But that was enough encouragement for the hosts as they smashed eight goals and reached the final.

Babel blows

FROM PAGE 17

United, though, Giggs ultimately lost it for Ferguson's men when he allowed Mascherano to steal possession in the touchline in front of The Kop.

Giggs should have cleared, but Mascherano claimed the ball and squared to Babel, who netted from 12 yards to cap a dramatic Liverpool fightback.

ICC's lost chance

INTERNET, undated

The postponement of the ICC Champions Trophy was not only a monetary loss for host nation Pakistan but the chance to hold the international captains' meet by the ICC is lost too.

There used to be a practice of arranging an international cricket captains' meeting by the ICC every year.

"No, we have not stopped that practice. The meetings still take place but now we do so during ICC events where all captains are in a single location," ICC's media manager Brian Murgatroyd told Cricketnext.com.

ICC's General Manager (Cricket) David Richardson will not be able to meet all captains together until next year. He, however, may meet few captains occasionally and discuss about the prospects of the game.

Richardson is believed to have met India's Test captain Anil Kumble (during India's recent tour of Sri Lanka) but his meeting with ODI and Twenty20 captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni is now deferred.

Modi to head Champions League

INTERNET, undated

BCCI vice-president and Indian Premier League's chairman and commissioner, Lalit Modi was on Friday appointed the Chairman of the board of the Champions League Twenty20.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the three founding member boards the Board of Control for Cricket in India, Cricket Australia and Cricket South Africa, a media release said here on Friday.

Lalit Modi, the Chairman and Commissioner of the DLF Indian Premier League and the guiding force behind the event, is also the President of the Rajasthan Cricket Association.

Lalit Modi was listed among India's 20 most powerful people by India Today magazine. Under his astute and enterprising leadership, the BCCI's revenues have increased seven-fold since he joined the board in 2005.

In the August 2008 issue of the leading British sports magazine Sports Pro he is ranked number 17 in the Power List of Global figures connected with sports.

He was also featured on the cover page of the magazine in its July issue. He is further hailed as the Best Rain Maker (money maker) for any sports body in the history of sports globally. In the short time that he has been a sports administrator he has raised over 4 billion dollars for his organisation.

The inaugural Champions League Twenty20 season will be held from December 3 to 10, 2008 where eight teams are expected to take part.

The second edition of the tournament will be contested by 12 scheduled to be held from September 25 and October 10, 2009.

The prize money of 6 million dollars, will be shared between the teams and their players. The Governing Council of the event together with its founding cricket boards believes that the significant prize money to be shared by teams and players will ensure that the benefits of the event will foster cricket's development by injecting new funding into domestic-level cricket.

At the same time will hand-somely reward domestic-level cricketers and provide a unique opportunity for a higher profile for players at the level below international cricket.

Surrey, who were 171-7 overnight, were all out for 210 as spinners Liam Dawson (two for 32) and Imran Tahir (four for 29) cleaned up.

The home side were forced to follow-on and were dismissed for just 148 with Dimitri Mascarenhas claiming four for 13.

Chris Tremlett and James Tomlinson shared the remaining six wickets to help Hampshire to the top of the table.

Somerset, chasing a first Championship title in their history, are just one point behind the leaders after their clash with Durham ended in a draw at Taunton.

Durham now stand on 157 points at third in the table after picking up a full complement of bonus points.

Symonds back in nets

CRICINFO, undated

Andrew Symonds has joined his good friend Matthew Hayden for a net session in Queensland in what is believed to be his first hit-out since being banished from Australia's squad. Symonds took the opportunity for some practice on Friday, the same day he was left out of Australia's 15-man touring party to visit India.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that Queensland were hopeful the all-rounder would be training with the state squad within a couple of weeks. He has reportedly already spoken to Phil Jauncey, the sports psychologist who will help Symonds through his rehabilitation program organised by Cricket Australia.

However, Cricket Australia stood firm on Symonds' situation and told the selectors he was not ready to be considered for the India trip. Aside from a brief statement that shed little light on his situation, Symonds has not spoken publicly since being sent home from Darwin for going fishing when he should have been at a team meeting.

Symonds' general attitude has been a concern for Australia over the past 12 months, a period during which he was subjected to monkey chants during an ODI series in India and was then at the centre of a racism controversy with India's Harbhajan Singh. The incident resulted in Harbhajan being initially banned for three Tests but then cleared on appeal.

Adam Gilchrist, Symonds' former teammate, believes the batsman remains upset about the racism episodes. "I think it is fair to

say that Andrew Symonds is heavily affected by the last year's incidents," Gilchrist told CNN-IBN.

"I can't speak for him as in what he was thinking but it is difficult to explain things. It is a common problem or issue and it is only going to be increased with pressures and intensity and the scrutiny that these players go through."

The loss of Symonds, who has averaged 77.70 in Tests in the past year, is a big blow to Australia's middle order ahead of the four-Test tour. Harbhajan, who will play in the series, is keen to put last season's controversy behind him.

"I would prefer to look forward," Harbhajan told the Sydney Morning Herald. "He is obviously a great player and there is no doubt about his ability to change a match. He has done a lot for Australian cricket. I hope he is well, and that he is getting better."

Casson too upset

CRICINFO, undated

Australian selectors looked to the future when choosing young NSW spinner Beau Casson for the West Indies tour, but seemingly arrived at their 15-man squad for India in a DeLorean on Friday by making 36-year-old Victorian Bryce McGain the team's first-choice tweaker.

All-rounder Andrew Symonds was not selected for the four-Test series and must instead undergo a counselling process to convince Cricket Australia he is committed to the team before he can be considered. McGain, two years younger than retired great Shane Warne, is expected to make his Test debut in the sub-continent next month while Tasmanian Jason Krejza was the shock second-choice spin option ahead of 25-year-old Casson, who debuted in Bridgetown in June with three wickets.

Casson, the only CA-contracted spin specialist, was too upset to talk on Friday but told his state coach, Matthew Mott, that he was determined to fight his way back. Former Blues spinner Krejza was en route to Hobart from India Friday after touring with the Australia A side, of which Casson and McGain were also a part of. The latter pair suffered injuries in India, but there was no suggestion Casson's groin injury played any part in his snubbing -- he told Mott he could play

next week if necessary.

Casson also sought the advice of NSW captain Simon Katich, who forced his way back into the Test arena for the Caribbean tour after it seemed his international career had stalled two years earlier. A bewildered Mott told the Herald after speaking with Casson: "It's a very hard pill to swallow. He didn't presume anything but everything was telling us he'd be in the squad. He would be inhuman if he wasn't upset."

"The feedback from everyone has been that he has done very well, so I don't know what has transpired. It is a bit hard for him to comprehend. It's not as though he played his way out of the side, he had one Test, he was given an opportunity and seemed to grasp it pretty well."

Mott added that McGain was a deserving tourist based on his impressive performances in last year's shield competition but, like many, wondered whether he presented a stop-gap solution to Australia's obvious spin woes.

Even McGain was willing to joke about his selection.

"He (Casson) is a good young spinner and there are a lot of years ahead of him. If they are picking me at 36 he's got 11 years to catch me," McGain said.

"He learns very quickly so I have no doubt there will be more opportunities for him in the future."

Casson has struggled with self-confidence in the past but Mott

said he was "very philosophical" about his omission.

"In the past he has got a bit down over these sorts of things. He is not kicking cans around and that is a good sign for Beau, it's certainly an area he has improved in," Mott said. "There is no point dwelling on it too much. He has already come to terms with it, while he doesn't agree with the decision he sees this as a minor setback. You don't have to be Einstein to realise that Bryce won't be there forever because of his age. He had a good chat to Kat, he is quite inspired by the way Kat came back into the side."

CA's national selection panel chairman, Andrew Hilditch, expected Australia's pace bowlers to do most of the damage anyway.

"It'll depend on conditions, they are spinner friendly, but when we won there last time (in 2004) we won because of our quick bowlers and we think it'll be the same this time," Hilditch said. "We can rely on them (the pace bowlers), they'll do a really good job, even when Shane Warne was there the quicks predominantly did the job, although Shane bowled really well and kept up a lot of pressure."

Casson could be recalled for the home series against New Zealand and South Africa this summer. With Symonds missing, Shane Watson is expected to win the No.6 batting role. Victorian paceman Peter Siddle was another surprise addition to the squad, beating out Ashley Noffke.

McGain best: Warne

CRICINFO, undated

Shane Warne has backed Bryce McGain as the best spinner in Australia and Stuart MacGill says McGain should also have toured the West Indies this year. But the champion leg-spinners disagreed on whether Beau Casson should have joined him in the squad to visit India and Warne said a potential mauling by India's batsmen could have wrecked Casson's future prospects.

McGain, 36, is almost certain to become Australia's oldest Test debutant in 24 years after being named with the Tasmanian off-spinner Jason Krejza in the 15-man squad for the four Tests in India. McGain was the leading spinner in the Pura Cup last season but was overlooked for the Caribbean trip, where Casson debuted after MacGill's unexpected retirement.

"I don't see it as a backwards step that Beau Casson is gone,"

Warne told the Daily Telegraph. "This is a tour of India and they have really good players of spin and we don't want to ruin anyone."

Warne spent time with McGain at the MCG indoor nets about a month ago and McGain picked Warne's brain about tactics in India. He put those plans into place in last week's Australia A game in Bangalore and is keen for another chat to Warne, who has full confidence in McGain as a Test player.

"If you look at the spinners at the moment in Australia, he (McGain) is the best," Warne said. "He has slowed his pace down and is spinning it beautifully. Being 36 is an advantage for him experience-wise, and he has basically played club cricket once a week for most of his career so his body isn't a worry."

MacGill agreed that McGain was a fitting candidate for the India tour. It was the mid-series departure of MacGill in the Caribbean that created Australia's latest spin conundrum and he said McGain was unlucky not to already be an international player.

"I'm very pleased for Bryce, because this should have been his second tour," MacGill told the Sydney Morning Herald. "If I had known that by the middle of the [West Indies] tour I would be impeded by injuries and have to pull out mid-series, I would never have gone. He's worked his arse off for this."

However, MacGill said he felt for his New South Wales teammate Casson, who was overlooked as the selectors wanted one wrist-spinner and one finger-spinner. It was a familiar story for MacGill, who never played a Test in India and missed out on the 2004-05 trip when the off-spinner Nathan Hauritz made his debut.

"I probably suffered in a very similar way," MacGill said. "I am uncomfortable with the general assumption that offies are better suited than leggies in India. It was frustrating for me, because I never found out how I would go, and I assume it's the same for Beau now. Everybody hates being put in a box."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Singer	1 Scoundrel
5 Vicious	2 Settled
8 Fat	3 Parks or Bonheur
13 Onassis, familiarly	4 Use again
14 Dangling	5 Food from
15 45, for	6 Mined heaven
16 Profit	7 DiCaprio's
17 Gilligan's home	8 Dubuque
18 Not come unglued?	9 Border there
20 Oldsters' org.	10 Moray, for one
22 Woolworth's was one	11 Ball holder
26 Weeps loudly	12 Prayer ending
29 Sartorial mishap	13 Unuttered "alas"
30 Sportage maker	14 Cleopatra's slayer
31 Farm fraction	15 Dweeb
32 Tie -toe	
33 Garment borders	
34 Hall a dance?	
35 Fowl often served au vin	

Solution time: 25 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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JKZQD XTAD DF DTRM T

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Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF SOME FLMSY PANCAKES ARE LEFT SITTING OUT