

Kolkpak loophole set to be closed

CRICINFO, undated

The end is nigh for the legion of Kolkpak players who have used European Union employment legislation to bypass quotas on overseas players in English cricket, according to a report in Monday's Daily Telegraph.

The growth of Kolkpaks, who mainly come from South Africa, has caused increasing concern in England. Until recently, it has been believed that there was nothing the authorities could do to restrict the numbers, but this view has now changed.

The newspaper says that the Central Council for Physical Recreation, a lobby group for sport in Britain, discovered that the agreement being used as the basis for the Kolkpak ruling -- the Cotonou Treaty, signed in 2000 -- was in fact meant to allow free trade and not freedom of labour.

While some of the counties are believed to be prepared to challenge the ECB's change of heart, it seems likely that 2009 will be the last year where Kolkpak players proliferate. The newspaper predicts that there could be a 60 per cent fall-off in the numbers of foreign players in county cricket.

Overseas cricketers will still be present, subject to existing ECB limits, but they will have far greater restrictions placed on them and they will have to prove that they are of a high-enough standard to be able to get a work permit. Generally, this will involve them having played a certain quantity of international cricket in the previous two years.

What the review of the Kolkpak legislation won't remove are the players who qualify because they have access to passports from EU countries because of parents and grandparents.

The article adds that the ECB is also set to introduce increased financial incentives for counties that field Under-25 England-qualified players from 2010.

New-look Tigers

FROM PAGE 17 Shamsur Rahman, Sohrawordi Shuvo and Mahbubul Alam -- are now touring with the academy team in Sri Lanka.

New Zealand will arrive in the city on September 30 to play two Tests and three one-day internationals in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The tour will start with the first ODI in Dhaka on October 9 after the Eid vacation.

We can get

FROM PAGE 20 Portsmouth manager Harry Redknapp labelled his side's defending "abysmal."

"I didn't see that result coming because we have just had three fantastic wins," he said. "I'm bitterly disappointed. We gave away some poor goals and our defensive play was abysmal. It was a catalogue of errors."

"We will have a look at the video and look at the goals we conceded. It's out of character because last season we had the second best away record in the league. It's only two weeks ago that we were celebrating a 3-0 win at Everton."

Milan ease

FROM PAGE 20 The former Chelsea manager started the redeemed Adriano up front alongside Sweden striker Ibrahimovic and the pair proved too much for Torino.

But Mourinho chose to focus on the Swede's contribution at the beginning of the campaign than Adriano's return.

"Ibrahimovic has had two incredible games and again today he was exceptional," said Mourinho. "Is Adriano back? We'll see. For me it's not enough to play well once in the league and once in the Champions League."

"For me it's more important that he realises that he messed up a lot."

Adriano lost form and shape over the previous two seasons and also complained of depression leading to a loan move to Sao Paulo. But now he is on the right track to get back to his best.

Torino's Elvis Abbruscato netted a Jurgen Samuel cross from close range for a consolation goal 14 minutes from time.

The top of the tree is taking on a familiar look with Juventus moving up to second after their 1-0 success at rock-bottom Cagliari.

Juve were without injured French forward David Trezeguet but new Brazilian signing Amauri proved he is more than an ample replacement as he volleyed home strike partner Vincenzo Iaquinta's flick-on after 39 minutes.

In Florence, Antonio Gilardino continued his return to top form with the winning goal for Fiorentina against Bologna in a 1-0 victory.



Argentina's Juan Martin Del Potro (L) celebrates with teammate David Nalbandian after beating Russia's Igor Andreev in the Davis Cup World Group semi-final in Buenos Aires on Sunday.

DAVIS CUP Spain-Argentina final

Tennis

AFP, Paris

World number one Rafael Nadal blitzed hapless Andy Roddick inside a Madrid bullring on Sunday to lead Spain into a Davis Cup final showdown against Argentina.

Spain, the champions in 2000 and 2004, saw off defending champions USA 4-1 while Argentina, who have never lifted the trophy, needed teenager Juan Martin Del Potro to deliver them a gripping 3-2 win over Russia in Buenos Aires.

Nadal, who has already picked up the Wimbledon, French Open and Olympic titles this year, cruised to a 6-4, 6-0, 6-4 victory over Roddick to hand Spain an unassailable lead in the 22,000-capacity Las Ventas bullring.

"Today I play an almost perfect match and it is very, very exciting," said Nadal who played in the 2004 final win against the USA.

He was just 18 at the time, virtually unknown, but still beat Roddick, then the world number two.

Sunday saw Roddick lose for the fourth time in six meetings to the swashbuckling Spaniard and he never looked like taking victory on a clay court made sluggish by morning rain.

Feliciano Lopez beat Sam Querrey 7-6, 7-6 in the final dead rubber to hand Spain a 4-1 win.

In Buenos Aires, world number six Nikolay Davydenko pulled Russia level with Argentina at 2-2 when he defeated David Nalbandian 3-6, 6-3, 7-6, 6-0.

But 19-year-old del Potro then registered his 25th win in his last 26

matches when he brushed aside Russia's Igor Andreev 6-4, 6-2, 6-1.

Del Potro, with four titles under his belt this summer and with his only loss coming against Andy Murray in the US Open quarter-finals, secured victory with a smooth crosscourt winner.

"It's amazing," said Del Potro. "I served really well today and it's like a dream."

"If someone had told me in July that I would win four titles and reach the Davis Cup final, I would not have believed them."

Russia, who lost both of Friday's singles, had stayed alive on Saturday when Igor Kunitsyn and Dmitry Tursunov beat Nalbandian and Guillermo Canas 6-2, 6-1, 6-7, 3-6, 8-6 in a marathon doubles.

That loss also ended world number seven Nalbandian's proud record of 16 wins in 16 Davis Cup rubbers on home soil.

Crucially, Argentina, the runners-up in 1981 and 2006, will have home advantage in the November 21-23 final when Spain will be appearing in their sixth title match.

In the play-offs, where the winners are assured of places in the 2009 World Group, Austria defeated Great Britain 3-2 at Wimbledon.

World number four Andy Murray saw off bitter rival Jurgen Melzer 6-4, 5-7, 6-4, 6-1 to pull the home side level at 2-2.

But Alex Bogdanovic, whose brittle temperament has often been his undoing, then squandered a first set lead to lose to Alexander Peya 2-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-2.

Australia, the 28-time winners, were condemned to another season in the Asia/Oceania zone after losing their play-off to Chile in

Antofagasta.

Olympic silver medalist Fernando Gonzalez clinched a straight sets victory over Chris Guccione to give the Chileans a 3-1 winning lead.

Gonzalez, the world number 11, beat the 88th-ranked Guccione 7-6, 7-5, 6-3 before Carsten Ball salvaged a little pride for the Australians, who were playing without the injured Lleyton Hewitt, when he edged Paul Capdeville 6-3, 7-6 in the dead rubber.

Romania retained their place in the World Group after beating India 4-1 in Bucharest.

With a 2-1 overnight advantage, victory was assured when Romania's Victor Hanesescu defeated Prakash Amritraj 6-2, 6-3, 6-1. Victor Crivoi wrapped up the win beating Somdev Devvarman 4-6, 7-5, 6-3.

The Netherlands completed a 3-2 win over South Korea in Apeldoorn.

Thiem De Bakker secured the vital last point beating Jun Woong-sun 6-2, 6-1, 6-3 after experienced Lee Hyung-Taik had defeated Jesse Huta Galung 1-6, 6-1, 7-6, 6-2 to pull the Koreans level at 2-2.

At Ramat Hasharon, Israel also booked their place in the 16-team World Group after taking a winning lead over Peru thanks to Dudi Sela seeing off Luis Horna 6-7, 6-4, 6-1, 6-2.

Croatia, the 2005 champions, saw off Brazil when Ivo Karlovic beat Thomaz Bellucci 7-6, 6-4, 6-7, 7-6.

Switzerland and Serbia, who had already wrapped up their ties on Saturday, completed 4-1 wins over Belgium and Slovakia respectively.

Dwi Kuncoro lifts Japan Open

AFP, Tokyo

Indonesian badminton ace Sony Dwi Kuncoro upset world number one Lee Chong Wei 21-17, 21-11 to win the Japan Open here Sunday, avenging his quarterfinal defeat to the Malaysian at the Beijing Olympics.

"I feel happy to show that I am no less capable than Chong Wei," Dwi Kuncoro said after winning in 41 minutes. He lost no games on his way to winning his second Super Series title of the year following the Indonesian Open in June.

"It hasn't been easy since I lost in Beijing. I was really devastated but came back with three weeks of training, hoping to beat Chong Wei again," said 24-year-old Dwi Kuncoro, who is ranked sixth in the world.

"Now I can continue with badminton in a positive way," said the Athens Olympics bronze medalist.

Lee, the defending champion and top seed, said he had been exhausted after weeks of silver-medal celebration and training after losing to China's world champion Lin Dan in the Beijing final.

Siddons takes

FROM PAGE 17 whether Ashraf should continue as captain.

Siddons also rubbished the talking of Ashraf's involvement behind the scenes in the departure of some players.

"There is no way I will be saying anything. I think Ash (Mohammad Ashraf) is a pretty honest person. As soon as he was approached, he let everyone know and discussed that openly with them and I think he has made the right decision," he said.

"I don't think (board is trying to protect Ashraf) not allowing to talk to the press, he just got off the plane. He has got to be brave in this situation," he added.

Siddons again confirmed that he had informed the matter to the board.

"As soon as I've heard there were talks about it, I have informed the Board. It wasn't names or confirmation. I think the players had an offer given to them and were in talks. Since I knew it, I had informed the board. I e-mailed to chairman of the cricket operations (Gazi Ashraf Hossain)," he said.

Siddons however didn't believe that the players had breached code of conduct by thinking of ICL during the Australia tour.

"I don't think so. I have job offers all the time, I talk and dismiss them. I think the players are no different. Everyone has got to make their decision and unfortunately our boys have chosen to go ICL," he explained.

Bangladesh coach however was not sure whether the ICL issue has made any impact on the Australia trip.

"I think there has to have been some (impact). If the players were thinking about it and with the money that was on offer, it must have had an impact. But you can't say it for sure as Australia played really well and we batted really poorly. We bowled quite well, but it didn't really look to me that focus actually was 100 percent on the game by all of our players."

He also opined on former national skipper Habibul Bashar's allegation against him.

"The player probably shouldn't be speaking like that. I spent two hours with the players today, when they got problems in training. If they want something special, they need to speak up, all our players know that. Habibul Bashar also knows that he should speak up. He is a big boy," he said.

'I won't get in KP's way'

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Michael Vaughan, the former England captain, believes his presence in the team will not put additional pressure on Kevin Pietersen, his successor. The two are known to share a good rapport and many believe Pietersen was instrumental in the selectors handing Vaughan a central contract despite his poor form in recent Tests.

"There would be absolutely no problem," Vaughan told the Sunday Mirror. "I would not get in KP's (Pietersen's) way, or in his hair, at all. Perhaps some people might feel it would be difficult to have the ex-captain around but I don't. And I'm sure KP wouldn't either."

"When I took over from Nasser Hussain, he was still in the team,

and it was a little strange having him standing in the field watching what I was doing. But it really wasn't a problem." Hussain played 11 Tests under Vaughan, with England winning six and losing three.

Vaughan is yet to play under Pietersen, having opted out of the



MICHAEL VAUGHAN

Gomez strikes for Stuttgart

AFP, Berlin



3-1 at home on Sunday to go third in the Bundesliga as Schalke 04 finish the weekend top of the table.

The shock of the weekend was defending champions Bayern Munich's 5-2 defeat at home to Werder Bremen on Saturday - their first league defeat of the season - which saw the German giants drop from second to eighth.

Gomez led Stuttgart's recovery after they fell behind when Karlsruhe striker Sebastian Freis had a free header in the penalty area on eight minutes.

Gomez, who is rediscovering his form after a poor Euro 2008, set up the equaliser for midfielder Sami Khedira on 22 minutes and then put his side ahead on 68 minutes to claim his third goal in five games.

Romania striker Ciprian Marica scored Stuttgart's third on 87 minutes to seal the win.

"In the first half, we didn't play so well, but we managed to take our

chances when they came," said Stuttgart coach Armin Veh.

"We were much better after the break, won the individual battles and we deserved the victory."

Newly-promoted Hoffenheim are up to second after they hammered Dortmund 4-1 at home on Sunday.

"The team played for virtually the whole game with total concentration and knocked the breath out of the opposition," said coach Ralf Rangnick.

"The boys are smart enough to know we must always play like this if we are to remain successful, so there is no danger of over confidence."

Martin Jol's Hamburg missed their chance to stay top of the Bundesliga when they were blitzed 3-0 at VfL Wolfsburg and the defeat leaves them fourth.

Hamburg began the weekend in first place, but lost top spot after Schalke beat Eintracht Frankfurt 1-0 on Saturday.

Goals by midfielder Ashkan Dejagah, defender Alexander Madlung and Brazilian Grafite left Hamburg on the ropes after just 28 minutes and they never recovered.

"It's not yet Christmas, but we virtually gave the goals away to Wolfsburg as presents," said Jol.

"In the second half, we tried

everything. That was perhaps the most positive part of the game."

Bayern Munich coach Jurgen Klinsmann could only rue his side's 'black' Saturday as Werder Bremen routed the defending champions in Munich.

Bremen's teenage midfielder Mesut Ozil, 19, provided the final passes for the first two goals and Sweden striker Markus Rosenberg scored goals either side of half-time as Bremen ran riot to leave Bayern on the ropes at 5-0 down.

Germany midfielder Tim Borowski scored two late goals, but they were no more than consolation.

"That was a black day. Bremen were better, more spirited and more aggressive than us," said Klinsmann.

"From this we can only learn, we can't bury our heads in the sand, we have to improve."

Schalke 04 grabbed a 1-0 win over ten-man Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday after Brazilian defender Chris was sent off on 34 minutes for assaulting Germany defender Heiko Westermann.

And on 41 minutes Frankfurt's misery was complete when Patrick Ochs tackled Schalke striker Jefferson Farfan in the area only to slide the ball under his own goalkeeper.

Mauresmo sent packing

Tennis

AFP, Beijing

Former world number one Amelie Mauresmo was on Monday dumped out of the China Open, where the battle will continue for the top ranking in the women's game.

Two-time Grand Slam winner Mauresmo, who has plummeted to 25 in the world after an injury-ravaged 2007, took the first set against Slovakia's Dominika Cibulkova but crashed to a 6-3, 4-6, 3-6 defeat.

"It's definitely disappointing, especially since I thought I was playing some pretty good tennis out there tonight," said Mauresmo, 29.

"I will have to digest this one and make sure I go back on the right track for the next few tournaments."

The former Wimbledon and Australian Open champion, who hit 13 double faults, said continuing injury problems had limited her practice time this year, although she said she had been injury-free for the past two months.

Cibulkova, ranked five places above the French player, wrapped up victory in two hours 30 minutes

in blustery conditions in front of a sparse crowd.

The 19-year-old raised her game in a second set in which both players had trouble holding serve, winning the final three games from 4-3 down to level the match.

In the decider, an increasingly nervy Mauresmo, whose performance was littered with errors, broke in the first game but then lost her serve to love as Cibulkova levelled the scores at 3-3.

The Slovakian, sensing her chance, broke Mauresmo again to lead 5-3 before serving out for the set.

Earlier, Daniela Hantuchova, the seventh seed here, beat Argentina's Gisela Dulko 6-3, 6-1.

The win for the Slovakian, now ranked 13 in the world, followed victory for Spain's Anabel Medina Garrigues over Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark, also in straight sets.

Hantuchova was pleased with her performance, saying: "I think I did the right thing. I got a lot of breakpoints."

Serbian Jelena Jankovic and Ana Ivanovic are seeded one and two at the 600,000-dollar China Open.

New world number three

Dinara Safina, who captured the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Sunday, withdrew due to injury.

The women's top ranking has been in flux since Justine Henin's surprise retirement in May, passing between Maria Sharapova, Ivanovic, Jankovic and current number one Serena Williams.

Meanwhile, on the men's side of the draw in Beijing, defending champion and Olympic silver medalist Fernando Gonzalez faces a tough battle to retain his title, with top seed David Ferrer and former world number one Andy Roddick in the hunt.

Other first round wins on Monday included Germany's Bjorn Phau and Taiwan's Lu Yen-Hsun.

Brothers

FROM PAGE 17 spared, complained the former Oranges footballer, who was however satisfied with the team's performance.

"We dominated from the start and the early goal helped. It was not the case when we drew with Chittagong Mohammedan. After going two-up, the players looked a bit relaxed and conceded a goal due to defence lapse. We hope to look after these small mistakes in the future," he added.

Tennis

AFP, Tokyo

Russia's Dinara Safina says she is striving to follow in the footsteps of her Grand Slam champion brother Marat, as she climbs up the rankings toward the top spot he once held on the men's tennis tour.

The 22-year-old Safina, who reached the French Open final and the US Open semifinals this year, powered past compatriot Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-1, 6-3 to win the Pan Pacific Open here Sunday for her fourth WTA title of the season.

The victory lifted Safina to a career-high ranking of third in the world and marked her ninth tournament win since her first victory in 2002 at Sopot as a 16-year-old qualifier.

"I'm happy. I just want to continue and be happy, healthy and I'll push myself as hard as I can to get as far as I can," she told reporters after the Pan Pacific final.

"I just hope that this win here in

Gillespie's tips

FROM PAGE 17 taking the new ball with four blosks on the fence.

"You had to put your ego to one side, and everyone was happy to do that. We did the jobs we had to do as a fast-bowling unit, and it worked. I'm sure they'll try something similar again."

Tokyo makes me more confident and I can just keep on going."

Her brother, Marat Safin, won the US Open in 2000 and reached the top of the ATP rankings in November that year. The 28-year-old also won the Australian Open in 2005.

Safina's victory was her 41st in 46 matches, according to the WTA website, and her sixth against Kuznetsova, the 2004 US Open champion, in 10 encounters.

"I'm just feeling great. I've been playing here this whole week the best tennis I've ever played," she said.

"It's obviously nice to hold a trophy in your hands. I never had this kind of trophy, so it makes it special."

Safina attributed her successes this season to her full trust in coach Zeljko Krajan.

"That's the only way, the only key to success. You have to trust somebody, because it's very difficult to make it to the top," said Safina.

"We have a very good relationship. We are very close friends."

She also credited her fine performance in Tokyo to the loss of about six kilos (13 pounds).

"I was a little bit heavier before and it was difficult to compete with the top 10 players, because you have to be one step faster than they are and the direction has to be faster."

Safina qualified for the season-ending elite championships in November in Doha, joining Serbian duo Jelena Jankovic and Ana Ivanovic, US star Serena Williams and Russia's Elena Dementieva.

"I really was struggling so much for four years," she said. "I think this year is the time that finally I know what I was looking for."

Stanford tie

FROM PAGE 17 so we are not able to confirm it," Peters said.

"An Indian reporter contacted me about the matter, and the next thing I know, I see this report on a website quoting me, so I will have to ask for a retraction and, hopefully, it can be dealt with speedily."

Since no formal notification has been received from the Stanford group, Peters explained the WICB could not proceed with any sanctions.

But if any player was found guilty of a positive test, action would be taken by the regional governing body following legal advice.

"This is the normal course of action should someone return a positive test, since the WICB does indeed have a disciplinary process in place for anti-doping cases."

He added the WICB would also need to consult with their lawyers, since this was a unique case, with the players in the Stanford Superstars side not directly under the supervision of the board.

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