

Sachin recalls his first Test

PTI, Mumbai

Expect the unexpected when it comes to Test cricket says Indian batting ace Sachin Tendulkar, who recalled how Wasim Akram peppered him with bouncers even as he expected yorkers in his maiden Test series in Pakistan.

Tendulkar was speaking here on Friday at the launch of a book 'Shadows across the playing field', authored by India's Minister of State for External Affairs Shashi Tharoor and former Pakistan Cricket Board chairman and diplomat Shaharyar Khan.

"I was included in the first Test [in 1989]. On the first day we fielded and I was so tired after six hours on the field that I slept after we returned to the hotel, woke up for my dinner and again went back to sleep," Tendulkar said.

"The next day we batted and Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis were charging in. The first ball I faced from Wasim was a bouncer."

Qasim bucks

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enough, and was also excluded from the 30-man pool for the Champions Trophy. His career, particularly of late, has been littered with fitness troubles.

"It is absolutely vital that Shoaib Akhtar performs well and on a regular basis in the coming domestic cricket season," Qasim said, "and proves to the selectors that not only is he bowling well and taking wickets, but he can maintain his fitness levels too. It's down to Shoaib to show us that he can get himself fit and bowl well."

Shoaib, who will turn 34 next week, last represented Pakistan in a one-day series against Australia in May, during which he was not at his best. Chances of a comeback have also been hit due to the emergence of young fast bowlers like 17-year-old Mohammad Aamer.

Rony stars

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day on 19 without loss in 3 overs.

BRIEF SCORES

GP-BCB NCA: First innings 267 all out in 85 overs (Nadiuddin 19, Rony 74, Farhad 39, Horn 42, Mithun 24, Nasir 28; Andrew Brich 3-54, Richard Cameron 4-109)

SBNA: First innings 19-0 in 3 overs (Andrea Agathelou 11 not out, T Bodibut 7 not out)

Messi to earn

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Earlier Friday Barcelona president Joan Laporta said he was optimistic that the club would reach an agreement with the player.

"What is most important is the commitment and affection between the two sides. That clears the way for everything to go as it should when it comes time to draw up the paperwork," he told reporters in Seattle.

Rio's Chelsea

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Foster or Tomasz Kuszczak will deputise for Dutch goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar, who is sidelined for eight weeks after finger surgery.

Meanwhile, Ancelotti can land an early psychological blow against the team Chelsea have to overhail to win the title for the first time since 2006.

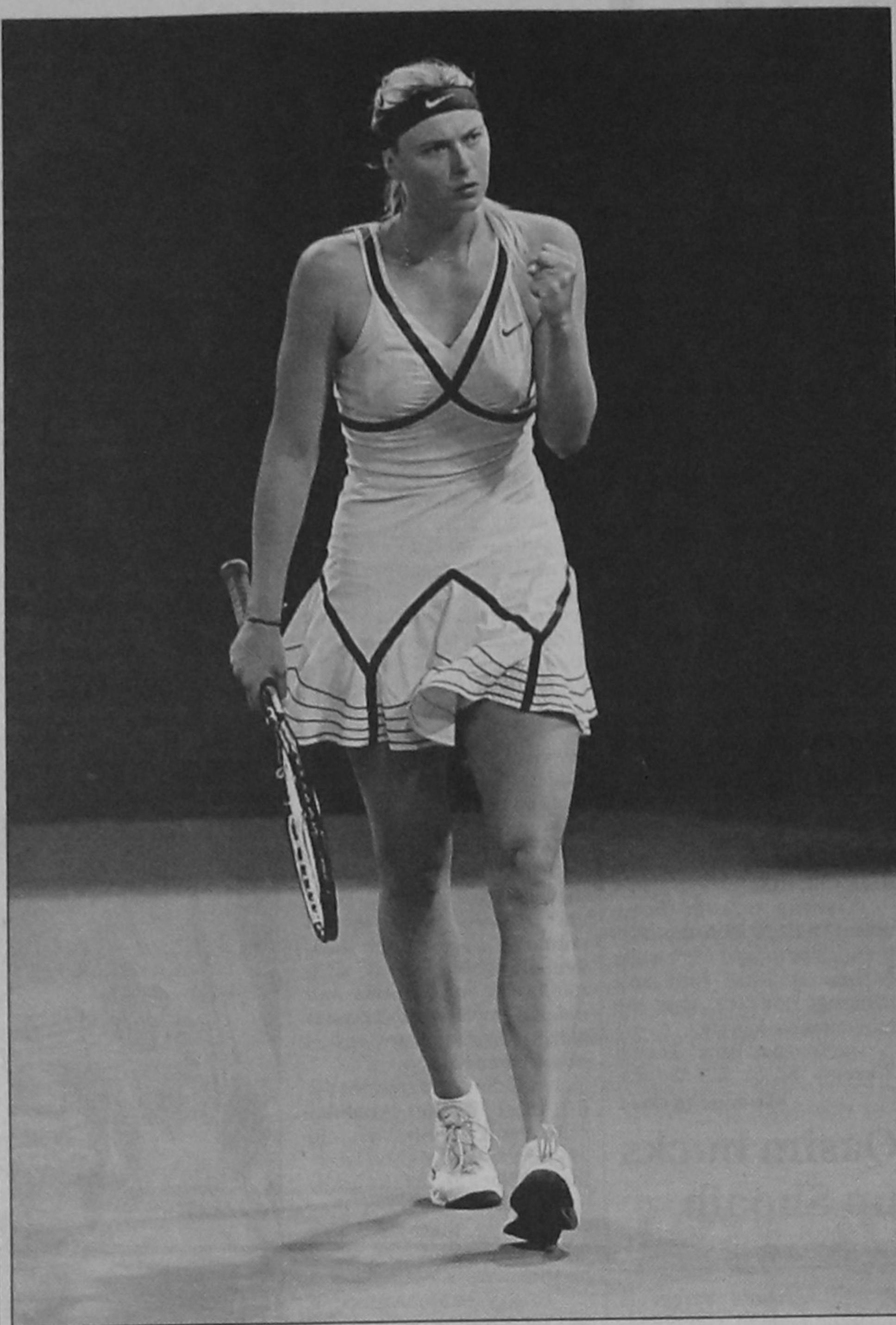
The former AC Milan coach's success in the Champions League impressed Blues' owner Roman Abramovich but he would dearly love to end United's three-year reign as English champions as well.

"I think we are ready to start this season against Manchester United on Sunday. It will be a very difficult match but we are excited and very happy to play at Wembley," Ancelotti said.

"It will be the first time for me to be at Wembley. It is not a friendly game, it is very important for us. We play against a great team. They were in the final of the Champions League last season."

"We have respect for this team but we want to win and play well. We want to put our pressure on the pitch."

Ancelotti is likely to be without new signing Yuri Zhirkov as the Russian midfielder makes a slow recovery from a knee injury, but United have injuries problems as well, with defenders Nemanja Vidic and Wes Brown both sidelined.



Fred 'keen'

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The 31-year-old star of England's victorious 2005 Ashes campaign has announced this will be his last Test series of an injury-plagued career.

But with England 1-0 up in the series, a statement issued by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) here on Friday said: "Andrew is still very keen to play in the fifth Test at The Oval and a decision on this will be made in due course."

He will not be exposed to undue risk or masking injections and any decision regarding his participation in the fifth Test will be made in conjunction with the ECB, his surgeon and the Lancashire medical team."

Flintoff, England's captain when they lost the Ashes 5-0 in Australia in 2006-07, had several injections earlier in the series.

The ECB statement added: "There have been some media reports of repeated cortisone injections into the knee to mask the injury, but these reports are inaccurate."

"Andrew has shown great determination and selflessness making a conscious decision to push through discomfort in order to help the England team reclaim the Ashes. This is in the knowledge that a further operation is a possibility."

Fast bowler Stephen Harmison replaced Flintoff in the only change to the England team that drew the third Test at Edgbaston.

North powers

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Harmison saw his first ball of the day - a short half-tracker - pulled so far in front of square by Clarke the ball went for four to long-on.

England were failing to follow the example of Clark, who'd shown how to bowl on a fine pitch for batting Friday by maintaining a probing line and length.

Broad then became the third England bowler whose first ball Saturday went for four when North clipped him off his legs.

Australia vice-captain Clarke, who made 136 in England's second Test win at Lord's and 103 at Edgbaston, fell in sight of a third hundred in as many Tests when he was lbw to Graham Onions for 93, having faced 138 balls with 13 fours.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard at tea and the close of Australia's first innings on the second day of the fourth Ashes Test against England at Headingley on Saturday:

ENGLAND: First innings 102 (Siddle 5-21, Clark 3-18)

AUSTRALIA: First innings (overnight 196-4)

Watson lbw Onions 51

Katich c Bopara b Harmison 0

Ponting lbw b Broad 78

Hussey lbw b Broad 10

Clarke lbw b Onions 93

North c Anderson b Broad 110

Haddin c Bell Harmison 14

Johnson c Bopara b Broad 27

Siddle b Broad 0

Clark b Broad 32

Hilfenhaus not out 0

Extras: (b-9, lb-14, w-4, nb-3) 45

Total: (all out in 104.1 overs) 445

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-133, 3-

140, 4-151, 5-303, 6-323, 7-

393, 8-394, 9-440

Bowler O M R W

Anderson 18 3 89 0

Harmison 23 4 98 2

Onions 22 5 80 2

Broad 25.1 6 91 6

Swann 16 4 64 0

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