SA look to home advantage

Cricket

CRICINFO, Johannesburg

South Africa will bank on home advantage finally paying off against England with a pitch that will boost their chances of levelling the series in the final Test at the Wanderers from Thursday. After failing to take the visitors' last wicket at Newlands, South Africa must win to avoid successive home series defeats, following last year's loss to Australia, and are looking for a few favours.

The pitch at Cape Town became slower as the match went on making the new ball a crucial period of each innings. However, the expectation is that the surface at Johannesburg will offer something for the quicks throughout after above average rainfall around the highveld in the last few weeks.

The man in charge of producing the 22 yards is Chris South Africa are looking for. "Obviously they have to win the Test, they don't want to lose the series. They are looking at a result wicket because they don't want to end with another draw," he told

Cricinfo. The Test strip will be one of the surfaces that was used for the Champions Trophy in September, which provided considerable help for the quick bowlers. Scott expects similar conditions this week, but has ensured his main surfaces have been protected with no matches on them since the Champions Trophy.

The Wanderers has staged a huge amount of cricket in the last 12 months, with Scott also having to produce surfaces for the IPL. His job has been made harder by a reduction in the number of pitches available down from six to four, which has meant a juggling act to get surfaces ready.

"Last year, I lost two of my main pitches and they are out of commission for the whole season so everything has had to be squeezed on the others and it has been more of a challenge," he said. "But I've kept the Test pitch protected, there hasn't been any cricket

Experiment

FROM PAGE 17 side, these young bowlers will

benefit a lot.

India take on Bangladesh today in the last group match which is essentially a dead rubber. Zaheer though thinks that they won't be taking this match lightly.

Every international game is important because we represent the country and we feel proud for it."

Zaheer also praised the innings of young batsman Virat Kohli who scored 71 not out to see his side home. He said that this is all a good headache for the team management as the batsmen are all grabbing their opportunities.

Fergie's new

just try to get him sorted and

added: "We're satisfied with a

point because this is a difficult

place to go to. It's not a bad

been saying that for months,"

Ferguson insisted. "I don't

not going to be easy. Teams

like Birmingham have really

improved, Alex has players

that will run 100 miles for him.

record stretching way back to

1907-08 with their 12th suc-

cessive top-flight unbeaten

league game and only Scott

Dann's own-goal deprived

carried away and insisted

Premier League survival was

his only target, even though

that seems all but assured for a

Birmingham side that are now

because we could lose every

remaining game this season,"

the former Scotland defender

of, but I am not that interested

"It is a record to be proud

"We have done nothing yet,

eighth in the table.

said.

in statistics."

outcome of a medical.

But McLeish refused to get

them of a famous victory.

Birmingham broke a club

It is a point gained for us."

know if anyone is listening.

"It's a tough league. I have

"Going to Birmingham is

Reflecting on the match, he

FROM PAGE 20

get him fit again."

point.

on it since the Champions Trophy to allow them to recover.

"They'll be pretty much like the Champions Trophy I would say," he added. "The pitches for the Champions Trophy were not accidental, I said before the tournament that the pitches would be more lively, but I had to have them that way because I needed to look after them because they were my Test and ODI surfaces. I had to nurture them because I only had the other two to fall back on."

Despite having produced a mass of pitches for one-day and Twenty20 cricket in recent months, it is still the skill of providing a Test strip that gives Scott most satisfaction.

"I've always maintained that a Test wicket should live up to its name in that it's a test between bat and ball, unlike one-day cricket where everything is so loaded towards the batsman that the bowlers almost have no chance," he said.

"I actually enjoy doing a Scott and he knows what Test wicket because it allows you to create something that is going to have a balance and I love seeing Test cricket in that sense. The bowlers have got something to work with, there's a bit more grass on the pitch, and over five days -- if it lasts that long -- the pitch will deteriorate."

Warne spurred Hussey on

CRICINFO, undated

Michael Hussey used Shane Warne's criticism of his batting to drive him to the matchwinning century against Pakistan in Sydney last week. Hussey, who stole the game with his unbeaten hundred in the second innings, had heard the calls for his sacking towards the end of the West Indies series before fighting back with 82, 4, 28 and 134 not out in the past two matches.

"It's hard when someone of the ilk of Shane Warne is criticising you, because he's obviously played a lot of cricket and he knows his stuff pretty well," Hussey said in the Sunday Herald Sun. "So it was pretty motivating to try to prove him wrong."

Warne has since downgraded his stance and Hussey said it was great to show up the critics. "Just to prove to him and to everyone that I still can play at Test match level, it's the most satisfying feeling you can get, especially after you copped a lot of criticism over the course of the summer," he said.

Hussey put on 123 with Peter Siddle for the ninth wicket to give Australia a 175run lead and the 2-0 series success was sealed when Pakistan were dismissed for 139. Despite the century, which was his first at home in two years, Hussey said he would have to continue to perform consistently to stay on track for next summer's Ashes.

International final on Sunday. NSF & BWF expect Razzaq

brisbane a

FROM PAGE 17

to wipe out their failures of the Colombo SA Games by making better results this time at home.

But, Bablu did not make it clear what he meant by 'better results', rather he said the shooters have been doing well in the camp and at the moment they are not in a position to reveal the scores of the shooters to give the undue advantage to their opponents. Convener of the SA Games

Media Committee Asaduzzaman Noor, Chef de Mission of Bangladesh contingent Mizanur Rahman Manu, general manager Bangladesh contingent Mahfuza Akter Kiron were among others present on the occasion. WEIGHTLIFTING SQUAD:

Akramul Huq (56kg), Abdualla al Mumin (85kg) Hamidul Islam (77kg), Monoronjon Roy (77kg), Biddut Kumar Roy (105kg) and Feroz Mahmud (105+ kg). Reserved: Shimul Kanti Singha (62kg) and Farhad Ali (94kg). Officials: Faruk Ahmed Sarker (coach), Mohammad Motaleb (coach)

FROM PAGE 17 Australia for Pakistan if and Shah Rezaur Rahman Hiru

selected.' (manager). SHOOTING SQUAD: 10m air surrendered the Test series, rifles (women): Sharmin with the third and final Test in Akhter Ranta, Syeda Sadia Hobart still to be played, and Sultana, Tripti Datta and they were hoping to make Sharmin Akter (reserved); amends in the five one-dayers 10m air rifle (men) Abdullah Hel Baki, Asif Hossain Khan, and lone Twenty20 interna-Shovon Chowdhury and tional that follow. Mahmudul Hasan (reserved); 25m pistol (women): Sinthia Pakistan's 2009 World Nazneen, Mitti Dewan and Twenty20 triumph on his Antara Islam; 25m pistol return from the unofficial ICL, (men): Hafizur Rahman, Razzaq's all-round ability, Moksedur Rahman and Selim especially his big hitting lower Azad; 50m rifle (men): down the order will, no doubt, Towfique Shahriar, Ramjan be missed by the visitors. Ali and Abdullah Hel Baki; 50m rifle (women): Sabrina tured for Pakistan against New Sultana, Tripti Dutta and Zealand in November last year. Sharmin Shilpa; 10m air Pakistan lost the three-match pistol (women): Armin Asha, ODI series in Abu Dhabi 2-1, Sinthia Nazneen and Farhana but swept the Twenty20 inter-Kawser; 10m air pistol (men):

Hafizur Rahman, Moksedur

Rahman and Selim Azad; 50m

pistol (men): Nadimul Islam,

Selim Azad and Hafizur

Rahman; skeet (men): Iqbal

Islam, Nuruddin Selim and

Altamash Kabir.

US star Andy Roddick holds aloft the trophy after defeating Radek Stepanek in the Brisbane

INDIA-SL SCOREBOARD

Did not bat: Dhoni, Raina, Mishra, Jadeja, Zaheer, Sreesanth, Bowler

	10,000	100.00	750,000	(5)55
Welegedara	5.4	0	51	0
Lakmal	10	0	75	0
Thushara	6	0	33	1
Randiv	6	0	19	0
Perera	5	1	32	1
Result: India won by 8 wickets.				
Man of the metaly Zahoor Vhan				

Man-of-the-match: Zaheer Khan. Toss Sri Lanka.

Umpires: Enamul Haque and Ian Gould.

Simons India's bowling

injury and played with it last **FROM PAGE 17** week," Ferguson said. "We'll one of the contenders for the

vacant bowling coach posi-

MS Dhoni, India's captain, recently admitted that the absence of a specialist bowling coach is hurting the team's performance. It was no understatement, because the inconsistency in the fast bowling department has remained a concern right from the World Twenty20. In England, Zaheer Khan had aggravated the shoulder injury he picked during the IPL in South Africa. His inability to go full throttle exposed the younger lot like Ishant Sharma and Praveen Kumar, and though Ashish Nehra was around he was just

finding his own feet, having

time. Things did not improve during the Champions Trophy, and India's problems were exacerbated during the home ODI series against Australia, which they lost 4-2.

During the recently concluded Sri Lanka series the Indian fast bowlers were lukewarm even if they improved on their death bowling, and in the current triseries in Bangladesh they have been disappointing. They failed to defend a total of 279 against Sri Lanka and allowed Bangladesh to post 296.

The 47-year-old Simons, who played 23 one-day internationals for South Africa and toured New Zealand in 1995, has a rich

made a return after a long pedigree in the coaching profession and was South Africa's head coach from 2002-2004, a period when Kirsten played under him. Simons spread his first-class career, mostly with Western Province, over 17 seasons as a right-arm medium pacer and a handy lower middle

> order batsman. He has never had any experience as a bowling coach except for the brief stint in the second IPL in South Africa last year, where he worked as a consultant with Royal Challengers Bangalore. Simons has worked in various capacities at the prestigious High Performance Centre in Pretoria along with the likes of KeplerWessels.

Zoran picks 39

along with veteran striker Mohammad Yousuf of Sheikh Russel KC.

Manager Hasanuzzaman Bablu said the Serbian coach having watched a few matches of the Bangladesh League picked eight to nine beside the players' list provided by the National Team Management Committee.

Sporting Gijon midfielder Bablu, also executive com-Michel was a guest at St mittee member of the Andrews for the game and is Bangladesh Football expected to complete a 2.75 Federation, said that the million pounds transfer early coach told him that he would next week depending on the cut down the preliminary squad to 25 after a week's

He also informed that two British-born Bangladeshi's --Mia-- will join the camp.

eliminated from the group stage in the last edition of the SA Games in Colombo in 2006, have been drawn in Group A along with Nepal, Maldives

and Bhutan. Preliminary squad: Aminul Haque, Mazharul Islam Himel, Mostaqur Rahman, Mohammad Nehal, Mamun Mia, Ariful Islam, Mofazzal Hossain Saikat, Nasirul Islam,

camp to be started from Atiqur Rahman Mishu, Arup midfielder Habibur Rahman Monday at the Bangladesh Baddya, Akramuzzaman Shohag of Abahani Limited Krira Shikkha Protisthan Liton, Mintu Sheikh, M Sujan, Wali Faisal, Aminul Islam, Mamunul Islam, Shedul Islam Shahed, Imtiaz Sultan Zitu, Sarwar Ahmed and Shiblu Monaem Khan Raju, Maruf Ahmed, Mobarak Hossain, Bangladesh, who were Zahed Parvez Chowdhury, Mejbabul Haque Manik, Shakil Ahmed, Habibur Rahman Shohag, Alamgir Kabir Rana, Enamul Haq Sharif, Zahid Hossain, Arman Aziz, Zahid Hasan Emily, Abdul Baten Komol, Mithun Chowdhury, Touhidul Alam Sabuj, Touhidul Islam Siddique, Enamul Haque, Nasiruddin, M Yousuf, Sarwar

Ahmed and Shiblu Mia.

AFP, Brisbane

Tennis

American Andy Roddick held off a magnificent fight-back from Radek Stepanek to claim a thrilling 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (9/7) victory in the final of the Brisbane International on Sunday.

Stepanek saved six match points in the second set tie-break but couldn't save a seventh and when he served a double fault at 7-8, Roddick claimed the first title of the year.

Roddick seemed to be headed for a straightforward victory when he won the first set and led 5-1 in the second.

But in a match reminiscent of the women's final on Saturday when Justine Henin came back from an almost identical position against Kim Clijsters, Stepanek stormed back against an increasingly agitated Roddick.

Stepanek won five straight games to lead 6-5 but once the set went to 6-6, tie-break specialist Roddick had the advantage.

The American raced to a 6-1 lead before Stepanek came back again, winning the next five points to make it 6-6. However, the huge effort on a stiflingly hot

Brisbane day seemed to take its toll on the 31-

year-old Czech as his tired-looking second serve sailed just over the service line. "It was weird -- I don't think I've ever squandered a lead where I've been putting in first

serves and making approach shots," Roddick "The first time I served for it I had a double fault, but I don't know that I missed a ball apart

from that. "The next one I actually made five out of six

first serves and again was coming in. "Once he got down he kind of loosened up and played more aggressively.

"In the breaker I think it was the same deal,

"I made my first serves, and I think those thoughts were helping me hang on to the last shred of sanity I had."

The title is the 28th of Roddick's career and his first in Australia.

"I certainly don't know if I expected to come and win my first tournament after a pretty extended lay-off," he said.

The win also put an end to Stepanek's ninematch winning streak in Brisbane, which included taking the inaugural title at the Queensland Tennis Centre in 2009. The first set was a fascinating battle between

the raw power of Roddick and crafty play from Stepanek, who put the world number seven under real pressure from the first game. Stepanek had break points in the seventh and 11th games but was unable to convert

them and he was made to pay as the hugeserving Roddick took control of the tie-break from the first point. Roddick came out firing at the start of the second set as he broke Stepanek in the opening

game and again two games later to open up a 4-0 lead. Stepanek refused to give in and he began to play some superb tennis, moving Roddick all over the court, bringing him forward with drop

shots then lobbing the American when he was stranded at the net. "He had the match under control but I was fighting until the last point -- I never gave up and I got my chances at the end in the second

set tie-break," Stepanek said. "I played great tennis and didn't miss many balls and the pressure he was putting on me

until that point completely changed and I was putting pressure on him and I was doing it

Kamran yes, Kamran no! Sydney Yousuf resisted talk of that he has the backing of a

Andy storms to victory

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

In the aftermath of Sydney, confusion. As Pakistan look ahead to the third Test in Hobart that starts on Thursday, contradictory noises are being made over the future of under-fire wicketkeeper Kamran Akmal. After the loss at the Sydney

Cricket Ground, in which Akmal dropped four catches, an incensed Pakistan Cricket Board sent Sarfraz Ahmed as a replacement from Pakistan, insisting in a strongly-worded statement that he "will participate" in the Hobart Test.

Akmal, however, has said that he is expecting to keep his place, as reports emerge

number of players within the side, including possibly the captain, Mohammad Yousuf. "I was very successful with my batting and wicketkeeping on the New Zealand tour and before the New Zealand tour. So I was very happy," Akmal was quoted as saying in Hobart by

the Sydney Test match was not good for me -- this happens. I'm very keen. My confidence is very high Management is very confident for me and coaches, Intikhab Alam, Waqar Younis, Aaqib Javed, and my teammates also. I will play the third Test match and more matches for my country."

"But I think the third day of back home.

During and after the loss in

Only pride to play for

FROM PAGE 17

nationals in Dubai 2-0.

Islam, who made a poor international debut against Sri Lanka and was dropped in the very next game, may come back into the side in place of Rubel Hossain. "The playing eleven hasn't

Pakistan have already

Having played a key role in

The 30-year-old last fea-

been decided yet, but there might be a change in the pace bowling department," hinted Shakib.

Shakib once again expressed his satisfaction over his team's batting performance in the tournament.

"I am satisfied with the batting, hopefully we will keep it up. It will be great if someone scores big. We have scored fifties or seventies, but no one converted them into big ones. If any one does that, it will be good for him and the team," he hoped.

"We are doing well, improv-

ing with every game. I won't comment on the bowling, lets see how we bowl tomorrow, since they are a very good batting side, it will be tough if day matches or if there was no we can not make early breakthroughs," he added. Though Bangladesh cap-

tain looked helpless after his team's heavy defeat against India in the first-leg much, he said that they would go into the match with a target of winning the last game.

"We will try to win, at least we want to make sure we don't do worse than we did in the previous match. We have the scope of improving in all departments," he promised.

The Bangladesh captain believes that things would not be any different if the pitch is different from the current ones because of the strength of the opponents.

Tony

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(Abbr.)

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"The pitches are all very good and solid, ideal for one day cricket. Not one for 400 though. If the matches were dew in the evening, the matches would've been a lot tighter."

"Everywhere in the world wickets are prepared in favour of batsmen. Spinners get some assistance during the day, if they can put the balls in the right places then they will get some assistance' he observed.

"All the three teams are very similar, although they edge us on all three departments. We cannot produce a pitch that will give us the advantage, whether we produce a batting-friendly or a spin-friendly wicket, that will work for their advantage more than ours," added Shakib.

that a player of his record cannot so easily be dropped from the side. Akmal is vicecaptain of the side and a popular member within the team. If there is even talk of retaining him -- let alone if he is eventually retained -- it seems to place the touring team management on a direct crash course with the board The situation between the two sides has anyway been

dropping Akmal, maintaining

poor on this tour; persistent calls by Yousuf for Younus Khan to be sent to strengthen the batting almost from the moment the tour started fell on deaf ears, the selection committee in Pakistan first delaying and finally turning down the request.

But at least two members of the on-tour selection committee say that Akmal will not play in Hobart. "They have sent Sarfraz all the way here for what if not to play?" one told Cricinfo. "Akmal will not play the third Test." As ever with Pakistan and its many power centres that is unlikely to be the last word on the matter.

Akmal's younger brother Umar, who has impressed and infuriated in equal doses so far on the tour, pulled up at training with a stiff back. Management remain confident that he will be fine for the Test, due to begin on January 14. Mohammad Aamer, who missed the second Test with a groin complaint, has also been training and is said to be progressing well, making it likelier still that Pakistan may finally be able to field their first-choice attack in Hobart at the third time of asking.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer **ACROSS** 39 Listener 2 Game 19 Golf legend

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Saturday's Cryptoquip: FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO WIN THE LOTTERY, A GROUP OF LUCKY SWIMMERS DECIDED TO POOL THEIR WINNINGS.

LNUAVSYGV

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals O

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