

Mickey to coach WA

AFP, Sydney

Former South Africa coach Mickey Arthur will coach Western Australia for the next three seasons...

Arthur resigned in January after five years as South Africa's national team coach...

"I stated when I announced my resignation from the South African post that I would only return to coaching if the ideal challenge presented itself...

"Western Australia is a fiercely proud cricketing state and I am determined to do all that I can to help the Warriors return to the top of Australian cricket."

Arthur said his experience of coaching at provincial and international level in the past decade would prove to be a great asset.

The highlights of Arthur's South Africa tenure were Test series wins in England and Australia in 2008, while South Africa achieved the official number one ranking in both Test and one-day cricket during his time in charge.

Biggies meet in semis

Tennis AFP, Miami

Former world number ones Justine Henin and Kim Clijsters set up Belgian blockbuster in the semifinals of the Sony Ericsson Open Wednesday...

Henin, playing her fourth tournament since returning from retirement, downed world number two Caroline Wozniacki 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-4.

Clijsters, in her first full season since coming out of retirement last year, beat ninth-seeded Australian Samantha Stosur 6-3, 7-5.

"It has always been special, and it will always be special," Henin said of her long rivalry with Clijsters. "Because Kim and I grew up together. We arrived on the tour almost at the same time, we played good at the same time, we retired at the same time, and we came back at the same time."

Clijsters, who married and had a baby in her absence from the women's tour, returned with a bang by winning the US Open last September.

Clijsters triumphed in January when the two met in the final of the Brisbane International -- Henin's first tournament back.

"That was one of the funniest, most exciting matches I think that I've played in my career," said Clijsters, who saved two match points in that contest. "Hopefully we can both play the same kind of match level and intensity."

Nadal, the world number four who is the highest-seeded player left in the ATP Masters 1000 hardcourt draw, moved into the semifinals with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over eighth-seeded Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France.

Nadal saved all eight break points he faced and sealed the victory with a blistering cross-court winner.

Nadal, playing his second tournament since injury cut short his Australian Open campaign, will continue his quest for his first title since last April when he faces in-form American Roddick, a 6-3, 6-3 winner over Nicolas Almagro.

"When you play a lot of matches and kind of play a high level, it feels like everything kind of slows down a little bit," sixth-seeded Roddick, the 2004 champion, said. "Muscle memory takes over a little bit more. I think I'm at that stage right now. Unfortunately with tennis, you have to start over every day."

The top three men's seeds -- Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic and Andy Murray -- were all eliminated before the quarterfinals.

"Obviously you're surprised any time he loses," Roddick said of Federer, who lost to Czech Tomas Berdych on Tuesday. "But that's tennis. That's why you play."

Henin, currently ranked 33rd in the world and playing on wild card invitation, has already beaten four seeded players in a row. She's 16-3 since ending a 20-month retirement in January, and she'll move back into the top 30 in next week's rankings.

After her slow start, Henin was dominant on serve in the final set and closed out the 2hr 45min match with a love game.

"I didn't play for two years, so it's good to be on the court a little bit longer," she said.

Henin, who had 31 unforced errors in the opening set, said Wozniacki's variety kept her from finding a groove early.

"She's really smart," Henin said. "She never hits two balls in the row with the same rhythm. She pushed me to play and work a lot."

Three-time champion Venus Williams will play 13th seed Marion Bartoli in the other women's semifinal on Thursday.

Henin, winner of seven Grand Slam titles, has never won in Miami. Her best finish here was in 2007, when she lost to Serena Williams in the final.

She was playing for the first time against the 19-year-old Wozniacki, who recalled watching Henin play on television.

Wozniacki said she wasn't surprised Henin's comeback had gotten off to such a quick start.

"It's really difficult to play matches again after you haven't played for a while, but I think she just didn't feel the pressure," Wozniacki said. "She just went out there and enjoyed it, and that's why the results are coming."



Kim Clijsters of Belgium celebrates after beating Samantha Stosur of Australia in the quarterfinals of the Sony Ericsson Open at Crandall Park Tennis Centre on Wednesday.

Naved wants to know the reason

AFP, Karachi

Pakistan all-rounder Navedul Hasan legally requested cricket authorities explain why he was banned for a year and fined heavily, an official said Wednesday.

"Naved has sent a legal notice to us in which he has inquired about the reasons of his punishment and we will soon respond to it," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) legal adviser Taffazul Rizvi told AFP.

Naved was one of seven Pakistani players who were handed bans and fines on March 10, following an inquiry into team defeats in Australia and discipline breaches on earlier tours of New Zealand and the United Arab Emirates.

Pakistan lost all three Tests, five one-day internationals and a Twenty20 match on the tour of Australia between December and February.

Former captains Younus Khan and Mohammad Yousuf were banned indefinitely "over infighting which brought the team down", while Shoaib Malik and Naved were banned for one year and fined two million rupees (24,000 dollars).

Shahid Afridi, Kamran Akmal and Umer Akmal were also fined heavily.

On Monday, Yousof announced he was retiring from international cricket to protest against the punishment.

Rizvi said players had been given reasons for their punishments and could appeal.

"We have already issued charge sheets and now the players can appeal to an arbitrator through the PCB governing board, and if the arbitrator asks us to give detailed reasons of punishments we will comply," said Rizvi.

The players have 30 days from the date of receiving the charge sheets to appeal to a three-judge tribunal.

The PCB has also received a letter from Younus demanding detailed reasons for his punishment.

"We have also advised Younus to appeal and if the arbitrator asks for detailed reasons of his punishment we will follow the process," said Rizvi.

ALL-TIME XI: SRI LANKA Current stars dominate

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Aravinda de Silva, Muttiah Muralidaran, Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene were unanimous choices for Sri Lanka's all-time XI, picked by a ten-member Cricinfo jury of ex-players and journalists.

Over half the side consists of current players and those recently retired: Chaminda Vaas, Sanath Jayasuriya and Marvan Atapattu, who got nine votes apiece, also made the XI.

Three players in the team featured in Sri Lanka's inaugural Test -- former captain Arjuna Ranatunga, fast bowler Ashantha de Mel and leg-spinner Somachandra de Silva.

The vote for the second spinner clearly divided the jury, with the two de Silvas tied on three votes each. Somachandra, who played 12 Tests in Sri Lanka's first two years at the top level, and led them in two, was picked for his superior Test record.

Ranatunga, the country's most charismatic captain, who led Sri Lanka to a World Cup win in 1996, got eight votes, while de Mel got five. De Mel's fast bowling partners in the XI are Ramesh Ratnayake, who took nine wickets in the team's maiden Test win, against India in 1985, and Vaas, Sri Lanka's second highest wicket-taker after Murali, who also serves as the all-rounder by default.

Jayasuriya was picked by all but one jury member as one of the openers, but there was no room in the XI for his old partner, Roshan Mahanama, with whom Jayasuriya added a world-record 576 for the second wicket against India in 1997. Instead, the second opener's spot

went to former captain Marvan Atapattu, who made 5,502 runs from 90 Tests.

Sangakkara was given the gloves over present Test keeper Prasanna Jayawardene and the highly rated Mahes Goonatilleke.

The jury included former players Ranjan Madugalle (now an ICC match referee), Sidath Wettimuny, Ranjit Fernando, Russel Arnold and Ranil Abeynayake, as well as some of Sri Lanka's leading cricket writers.

Sri Lanka is the fifth team in a Cricinfo series of XIs where all-star teams are picked for the top Test-playing nations.

Cricinfo also asked readers to vote for their favourites. The readers' XI had more contemporary players than the jury's. Mendis was picked as second spinner after Murali, while Lasith Malinga was preferred over de Mel.

THE READERS' XI Sanath Jayasuriya, Marvan Atapattu, Kumar Sangakkara, Aravinda de Silva, Mahela Jayawardene, Arjuna Ranatunga, Chaminda Vaas, Lasith Malinga, Ramesh Ratnayake, Muttiah Muralidaran, Ajantha Mendis.

THE NOMINEES OPENERS: Marvan Atapattu, Sanath Jayasuriya, Roshan Mahanama, Sidath Wettimuny, Tillakaratne Dilshan.

MIDDLE ORDER: Roy Dias, Arjuna Ranatunga, Aravinda de Silva, Kumar Sangakkara, Mahela Jayawardene, Thilan Samaraweera, Hashan Tillakaratne, Asanka Gurusinha.

WICKETKEEPERS: Mahes Goonatilleke, Amal Silva, Romesh Kaluwitharana, Kumar Sangakkara, Prasanna Jayawardene.

SPINNERS: Somachandra De Silva, Muttiah Muralidaran, Ajit de Silva, Ajantha Mendis, Don Anurasi.

FAST BOWLERS: Ravi Ratnayake, Chaminda Vaas, Ramesh Ratnayake, Ashantha de Mel, Lasith Malinga.

Prince Charles to attend CWG inauguration

PTI, New Delhi

Britain's Prince Charles will attend the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games (CWG) to be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here.

The Games are scheduled to be held between October 3 and October 14.

"We are delighted to announce that His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will represent Her Majesty The Queen at the opening of the Delhi Commonwealth Games in October," a British High Commission spokesperson today said in a statement.

"Further details will follow in due course," the release added.

The opening and closing ceremonies, athletics, lawn bowls, and weightlifting will take place at the Nehru Stadium, which will have a capacity of 75,000 spectators after renovation for the games.

The 2010 Games are the nineteenth edition of the Commonwealth Games, and the ninth to be held under that name.

LOCAL SNIPPETS

FROM PAGE 17 the quarterfinals. In the boys' singles, Wu Mong Marma thumped Rang 6-0, 6-0 and Akhter Hossain beat Tally 6-1, 6-4 to reach the semifinals.

INDEPENDENCE DAY CHESS

The Independence Day Rapid Chess Tournament will start today at 3pm at the Bangladesh Chess Federation hall-room.

It is an open event and interested players can enrol their name after giving an entry fee before start of the competition.

The event will be held in a seven-round Swiss-League system and cash prize will be given to the winners.

Barca blitz

FROM PAGE 17 Allowed a free run through the inside right channel, Ibrahimovic had his mind made up for him by Almunia's charge off his line and duly lifted the ball over the goalkeeper.

Only a superb stop from Valdes prevented Bendtner from heading Arsenal back into the contest after a fine cutback from Gael Clichy.

But it was no surprise when Barca extended their lead shortly afterwards. Xavi was the instigator, clipping a delicate through ball into the area and Ibrahimovic produced an emphatic finish to beat Almunia at his near post.

Wenger's response was to throw Walcott into the fray and the England winger's introduction yielded an almost immediate result that will have been noted by the watching Fabio Capello.

Typically neat build-up work culminated in Bendtner playing Walcott in behind Puyol and the winger's shot managed to slither under Valdes's dive.

Arsenal had secured a lifeline and they took a firmer grip on it with five minutes left after Fabregas, attempting to latch on to a Bendtner knock-down, was impeded by Puyol.

Day-night Tests distant

Cricket

IANS, London

There is a long way to go before day-night Test cricket becomes a reality as there is still no viable alternative to the red colour ball, said Dave Richardson, International Cricket Council's (ICC) general manager of cricket.

"The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) has been great in initiating trials around the world, but before we look at these projects we need to establish up front, from a scientific point of view, what makes sense," Richardson was quoted as saying in the Daily Telegraph Wednesday.

MCC played Durham at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi so that ICC could trial the pink ball under floodlights with the long-term aim of introducing day-night Test matches.

"The balls that have been developed so far are

still a long way off being able to last 80 overs."

"They just get too dirty. The beauty of the red ball is that it keeps its colour even when it's old," said Richardson, who watched the match.

Richardson's views will seem unnecessarily cautious to those wanting to press ahead with a day-night version of the longer format, but plainly there are caveats, not least the floodlit aspect of a game originally intended to augment the glory of a summer day.

"We need to commission a university to tell us what is the best option for colour combination for ball and sight screen," said Richardson.

"I'd be surprised if we couldn't find a ball that worked within 12 months, even if it was developing a better white ball."

"There are going to be some markets that prefer to watch Test cricket in the evenings and if we can schedule matches at that time we must do it. There will be a solution if there is a will for day-night Test cricket."

Clarke awaits promotion

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

Michael Clarke's increasing seniority within the Test team is set to continue with his likely promotion to No. 4 during the series against Pakistan in England. As the vice-captain, Clarke is being groomed to take over the leadership whenever Ricky Ponting retires and over the past year he has shouldered that responsibility by being Australia's leading run scorer with 1,171 at 65.05.

While Clarke's form has been outstanding at No. 5, the No. 4 Michael Hussey had a tougher year, although he lifted his output during the home summer. The Australians are already looking towards next season's Ashes series and after beating New Zealand 2-0, Ponting said he had been pondering whether the in-form Clark would be more valuable up the order.

"It's something I've been thinking about this week, to tell you the truth," Ponting said. "He's handled a lot of situations particularly well the last couple of years and in most conditions. There are a few other little things we

think about as well as far as the placements in the batting order is concerned but Michael is doing everything right to get up the order, certainly one more spot, anyway."

Clarke was one of Australia's best during the Ashes tour last year and they will be reluctant to shuffle the order during their battle to regain the urn. The only Tests remaining before the Gabba opener against England are two against Pakistan in July, and Ponting said that would be the best time to trial Clarke at No. 4.

"We'll see what happens in England and certainly leading into the Ashes series," Ponting said. "He probably has been our best and most consistent player with Simon Katich so we'll definitely have a look into that. The next games we play are against Pakistan and we obviously don't want to be making moves like that on the eve of the Ashes so if we do it, that would be a good time to do it."

Clarke showed his focus with a career-best 168 in Wellington after flying home to deal with his relationship with Lara Bingle. He finished the tour second only to Katich on the run tally, with 259 at 86.33, and in a month will be heading to the Caribbean to captain Australia in the World Twenty20.

Every rose has its thorn

FROM PAGE 17

mother, brother, sister, brother-in-law and children while one of his sisters and a few close relatives have applied for Indian visas from Germany.

Sources said that as the marriage will take place on April 11, the Shoaib's family will leave for Hyderabad Deccan three days earlier for attending other wedding rituals and both families are finalising dates in this regard.

Former Pakistan captain Shoaib is currently in Dubai for playing Bangladesh's Port City Cricket League and he is due to return in two or three days after which all the wedding programmes will be finalised.

But one thing is for sure that the couple will live in Dubai. During the two families' meet-

ings in the emirates in February, Sania's representatives told that the tennis star would no way live in Pakistan as the security situation in the country was not in favour. Besides, the diplomatic relations between the hostile neighbours were also at a low.

It was learnt that Shoaib was presented with an apartment in Dubai for playing in a T20 tournament in Canada in 2008, and the couple would stay there. Furnishing the flat is going on now.

Sania is not only in the news for her impending marriage but also for a film based on her life. Sonam Kapoor will play a character strikingly similar to Sania in Anes Bazmee's rom-com 'Thank You' film. The film's shooting starts mid-April in

Canada.

Just like Sania, Sonam plays a young, attractive tennis champ and falls in love with a guy, who is completely wrong for her. She soon realises her mistake and turns back before it's too late. Remember Sania calling off her engagement to Sohrab Mirza earlier this year before news of her impending marriage to Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik started doing the rounds?

Bazmee confirms the news and says, "Sonam does play a tennis champ, and Akshay Kumar plays a guy who's seeing 30-35 girls at the same time, until he meets Sonam. Though he gives up flirting, he's not particularly serious about Sonam too. It's a funny take on courtship."

each other were considered, the tournament could have been easily held.

"The one-dayers could have been easily accommodated if the six teams played in Bogra and Rajshahi. The travelling would have been less and more players, apart from the ones selected for the national setup, could have played," said Mashud.

"I am of the opinion that the bigger the cricket season, the better it would be for everyone. More cricket matches would mean more talented cricketers coming out," the Rajshahi captain said.

Originally the one-dayers were set between February 20 and March 11 according to the BCB domestic calendar, but the delay of the first-class competi-

tion in December-January made sure the first-class matches would eat into the one-day schedule.

Cricketers Welfare Association of Bangladesh (CWBAB) protested the new format and pay scheme of the first-class competition at the time and maintained that they wanted more matches for all the players.

"A tournament not taking place cannot be good for cricketers. We believe the one-day competition should have taken place," said CWAB convenor Debabrata Paul.

"We don't want any tournament to vanish from the calendar and at the same time we don't want cricketers to get less money, as we maintained before," said Paul.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a solution time of 21 minutes.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and question marks for solving.

CRYPTOQUIP

LSWC LZRJQ IK CSK IKEC CMHK ZN PKWV NZV AKZAJK CZ BJKWG ZRC CSKMV BSMHGKP QRBCE? NJRK EKWEZG

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: BECAUSE WE ALWAYS KEPT OUR EGG-LAYING CHICKENS IN A TWO-DOOR CAR, WERE THEY BEING COUPED UP? Today's Cryptoquip Clue: N equals F