

Aus prospect Holland out for season

AFP, Sydney

Australian Test spin bowling prospect Jon Holland will miss the entire season after undergoing shoulder surgery, Cricket Victoria said on Thursday.

The Victorian left- armer, who was rated among the two best Test spin options by national chairman of selectors John Inverarity last week, suffered a shoulder injury while playing Melbourne club cricket last weekend.

It was the third time that Holland, 25, has required surgery on his left shoulder.

Cricket Victoria said Holland had reconstructive surgery on his shoulder on Wednesday and would miss the rest of the season.

"It's disappointing news but I have come back from this before and I believe I still have a lot of good cricket ahead of me," Holland said in a statement.

"I was hoping that it may have been better news, but it wasn't to be.

I'll commence my rehabilitation and I'll work hard to come back."

Australia open their home international season against South Africa in the first Test in Brisbane on November 9.

Schmelzer

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and into the net.

It was his fifth goal of the competition as it stayed 1-1 at the break.

Only a reflex save from Casillas kept Dortmund out as Germany midfielder Mario Goetze unleashed a fierce shot in the 50th minute as Borussia laid siege to the Real goal.

At the other end, di Maria fired across the goal and just wide of goal with both Weidenfeller and the Dortmund defence at sea in the 55th minute.

Both Sergio Ramos and Xabi Alonso picked up second-half yellow cards for rough defending as Borussia kept pushing forward and were rewarded with their second when Schmelzer fired home from the edge of the area on 64 minutes.

Real burst into life after falling behind and Dortmund's defence found themselves working over time to keep Madrid at bay and hold on for victory.

Abahani eye

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opportunity.

Abahani's failure in the season's curtain-raising Federation Cup might also prompt the club management to search for a new coach in an effort to defend their league title and Ardesir is ahead of Ali Akbar in their eyes.

Local coach Amal Sen guided Abahani in Federation Cup. A source within Abahani club confirmed that Ardesir, who is trying to collect the Bangladeshi visa, is likely to arrive in Bangladesh before November 1 and the training camp for the professional football league will resume from October 29.

Siddikur's

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round of two-over-par 73. This tournament is a 'dream come true' for Siddikur as he said on the eve of the event because it affords him a chance to play alongside his childhood idol Woods. He will have to dramatically improve his performance if he is to remember the CIMB Classic exploits other than sharing the same scoreboard with Woods.



Top-seeded Belarussian Victoria Azarenka stretches to hit a forehand return against Angelique Kerber of Germany in the round-robin stage of the WTA Championships in Istanbul on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Azarenka gets closer

Tennis

AFP, Istanbul

Victoria Azarenka had to draw on all her reserves by saving two match points in a heroic three-hour six-minute tussle with Angelique Kerber in the WTA Championships.

The top-seeded Belarussian beat the German revelation 6-7 (11/13), 7-6 (7/2) 6-4 in an encounter full of magnificent rallies and surprises. Her win leaves Azarenka needing just one more win to guarantee her finishing the year as world number one.

Azarenka saved both match points by following up sound serving with bold and courageous driving. That helped make up for the five set points that Kerber had enterpriseingly denied the top seed in the first set tie-break.

Had Azarenka lost either of them -- from 4-5, 15-40 in the second set -- a pathway might have opened up for Maria Sharapova to sneak through to the summit instead.

Azarenka would now have to lose both her remaining group matches for this to happen, even though Sharapova later made sure of a place in Saturday's semi-finals by beating Agnieszka Radwanska, the Wimbledon runner-up from Poland, 5-7, 7-5, 7-5 in another three-hour encounter.

"I felt I had to go for it on both match points," Azarenka said. "I felt she would not miss, so I didn't want to wait for her to make a mistake -- I was determined to make it happen."

"I wanted to change the momentum and take destiny into my own hands. I had

a clear mind of what I had to do. It takes time to go through (what's needed) and learn that."

"I feel really proud I was a part of this match. Honestly you feel like you don't want to leave the court, the atmosphere is so good!"

Azarenka's three-set encounter also guaranteed that Serena Williams' second success of the tournament earned the American a semi-final place.

The Olympic, US Open and Wimbledon champion won 7-6 (7/2), 6-3 against Li Na, the former French Open champion from China, but only after a noisy, and surprisingly fraught performance.

Williams had to overcome the emotions which impelled her to smash a racket and earned her a code violation warning.

That happened during a weird fourth game in which one of the finest servers in the history of the game delivered two successive double faults to go a break down.

"I guess I was angry and I wasn't able to control myself," she said. "But sometimes I play better when I get angry."

Hers was a triumph of will more than anything, for she landed less than 50 percent of her first serves, dropped service games five times, and needed an hour and 50 minutes to get the win.

"I lost serve today more often than all of Wimbledon," Williams said. "I was just thinking about it too much. I didn't serve well yesterday and I thought about it. I just need not to think."

"But to win with a zero serve, compared with what I normally do, is something I can take from the match."

Sun TV buys 'Chargers'

AFP, New Delhi

Regional television network Sun TV on Thursday won an auction to buy the Indian Premier League team based in Hyderabad after the cash-strapped Deccan Chronicle group was forced to sell.

Sun TV, owned by the Chennai-based Maran group, put in the highest bid of 15.9 million dollars a year for the rights to the franchise in the lucrative Twenty20 league that was founded in 2008.

"The IPL Governing Council met earlier today in Mumbai to open the bids for a new IPL franchise," the Board of Control for Cricket in India said in a statement on Thursday.

"Sun TV network have won the Hyderabad franchise for an amount of 850.50 million rupees (15.9 million dollars) per year."

It was not known whether Sun TV will retain the team's previous name of the Deccan Chargers.

The Deccan Chronicle media group, which bought the Chargers before the inaugural IPL season, was thrown out of the league due to financial violations including failure to pay players' salaries.

The Sun TV network runs 32 channels, mainly in south Indian languages, which reach 95 million households, according to its website. The network is also viewed in 27 other countries.

Among the players signed up with the Hyderabad franchise are Kumar Sangakkara of Sri Lanka, South African fast bowler Dale Steyn and Australian batsman Cameron White.

The Chargers won the tournament in 2009 but finished second-last this year.

The new franchise will join the eight other teams from Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Delhi, Mohali, Pune and Jaipur in the sixth edition of the IPL scheduled for April-May next year.

The IPL has attracted large television audiences and many of the world's best players such as Chris Gayle and Kevin Pietersen, but it has also been dogged by controversy.

Mathews

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Malinga, will lead the team in the first three one-dayers against New Zealand. The opening match will be played in Pallekele on November 1.

SQUADS

T20: Angelo Mathews (captain), Nuwan Kulasekara, Dilshan Munaweera, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Kumar Sangakkara, Dinesh Chandimal, Jeevan Mendis, Lahiru Thirimanne, Thisara Perera, Shaminda Eranga, Akila Dananayaka, Sachithra Senanayake, Upul Tharanga.

ODI: Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Angelo Mathews, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Kumar Sangakkara, Dinesh Chandimal, Lahiru Thirimanne, Thisara Perera, Jeevan Mendis, Nuwan Kulasekara, Lasith Malinga, Shaminda Eranga, Upul Tharanga, Rangana Herath, Akila Dananayaka, Tharindu Kaushal.

Sky Sports

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BCCI to charge what it labelled "realistic costs" for use of facilities. Sky felt it had already paid this as part of its rights package, with no other governing body making such extra financial demands of broadcasters.

Eng get on India tour

Cook delighted to have KP with team

Cricket

AGENCIES, London

The England team on Thursday embarked on their gruelling Test tour of India with captain Alastair Cook insisting that Kevin Pietersen's text message scandal was over and he was delighted to have the controversial batsman in the squad for the series.

Cook, who was a driving force behind the reconciliation process that ended last week with Pietersen being added to the India-bound squad, said he wanted his best players to be with him for the four-match and eight-week Test series starting on November 15.

"For me as captain this is the best possible outcome because we have a world-class player back in our team. It's been a difficult two months for Kevin but he's contrite and he's determined to get back to what he does best, scoring runs for England. As a captain that's all I want."

"I want him to come back in the side and score match-winning runs like he has in the past," said Cook at the Lord's as the team prepares to leave for Dubai.

The team will train at the ICC Global Cricket Academy for two days till October 28 before flying next day to Mumbai where they will play their first tour match against India A's side.

Cook, who is on his maiden tour as Test captain, acknowledged the importance of cohesion and togetherness in the team over the course of the next 18 months, which includes this India tour and two Ashes series.

"The meetings before the tour have

been really helpful and key to this process. We're always going to have to work with every member of the side and different issues crop up but we know team spirit is important and every member of the squad and management will have to protect that," he said.

"During the meetings we have had with him these issues have been discussed. We are very confident he can fit into the team otherwise he would not have been added to the squad. Now Kevin is back we do have to draw a line under what's happened. Andy Flower and I have worked closely on this issue and I'm just delighted we have ended up where we are," said Cook.

Asked if it would not have been better had Pietersen been with England side rather than in South Africa playing for Delhi Daredevils in their Champions League Twenty20, Cook said, "In an ideal world it would but we knew about the Champions League before we settled this."

"But it would have been the same for Joe Root had Yorkshire got through to the semifinals. Kevin will come back with a clean slate."

Even with Pietersen in his side, the task facing Cook is enormous. England have managed just one Test victory in India since 1985 and the hosts will be well aware of their weaknesses, particularly with Duncan Fletcher in charge.

The first Test begins at Motera, Ahmedabad on November 15 before the second, third and fourth matches in Mumbai (November 23-27), Kolkata (December 5-9) and Nagpur (December 13-17).

Constitution

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We had only 33 days remaining when we got the letter from the NSC, so at this situation we can take time," he added.

The NSC vetted the amended constitution of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), paving the way for an elected president. The game's regulatory authority also reinstated the councillorship of former national cricketers, though in a modified version.

The NSC also asked the board to reinstate the post of CFO (chief finance officer) in the constitution and overruled the board's desire to have a COO (chief operating officer) in lieu of the CEO (chief executive officer) with a harsh note.

NSC however staked a bigger claim in the directorship of the country's most affluent sports body as they wanted the post of three directors instead of the existing one in the board.

"I think it would be better to take time to discuss all the issues before sending it back to the NSC when we are already at default," said Papon.

Yuvi to warm up against England

Cricket

AFP, New Delhi

Cancer survivor Yuvraj Singh got a chance to press his Test claim against England after he was named Wednesday in a 14-man squad for the opening warm-up game against the tourists.

England open their tour with a three-day practice match against India A in Mumbai on October 30. It will be followed by two more warm-up games before the four-Test series starts in Ahmedabad on November 15.

The tourists, who also play two Twenty20 internationals on the first leg of their tour, will go home for Christmas and return for a five-match one-day series starting on January 11.

All-rounder Yuvraj, who has not played Test cricket since last November, was treated for a rare germ-cell cancer between his lungs in the United States earlier this year.

The 30-year-old returned after a chemotherapy treatment in April and played in the recent World Twenty20 in Sri Lanka.

He also cracked a double-century in a domestic four-day game in Hyderabad this month.

Yuvraj has played 37 Tests since his international debut in 2000, scoring 1,775 runs at an average of 34.80 with three centuries. He was also named man of the tournament in India's 50-over World Cup triumph last year.

The selectors named Suresh Raina as India A captain.

INDIA A SQUAD

Suresh Raina (captain), Murali Vijay, Shikhar Dhawan, Ajinkya Rahane, Yuvraj Singh, Manoj Tiwary, Widdhiman Saha, Irfan Pathan, Vinay Kumar, Parvinder Awana, Ashok Dinda, Robin Bist, Ashok Maneria, Abhinav Mukund.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 35 DNA 53 Anger 21 Bloke 22 Emanation

1 Assistant 36 And the skies others (Lat.) 9 Banned bug spray 37 Fragrant

12 A-line wood originator 38 Founded

13 Choir (on) member 40 Ethereal

14 Playwright Levin 42 "Of course"

15 Went on a tangent 43 Talked over

17 Weep loudly 48 Pirouette pivot

18 Approximately 49 Great Lake

19 Makes less intense 50 Architect Saarinen

21 Military group 51 Conclusion

24 Sandwich shop 52 Gridiron arbiters, for short

25 Colors 53 Gridiron arbiters, for short

26 Sightseers 54 "The Greatest"

30 Dadaist Jean

31 Debtors' woes