

Tuesday 16th September, 2008

# Warne refuses to rule out international comeback

Legendary spinner Shane Warne has refused to rule out a shock international comeback to a depleted India-bound team even though he tipped an aging Bryce McGain as new number one Australian Test spinner.

"In my life I've learnt never to say never," Warne was quoted as saying by the 'Courier Mail'.

"But at the moment I'm very happily retired and I'm very happy with my life," he said.

Warne said the 36-year-old McGain was the top spinner in the country and added he had experience at his side.

"If you look at the spinners at the moment in Australia he is the best," Warne said.

"He has slowed his pace down and is spinning it beautifully. Being 36 is an advantage for him experience wise and he has basically played club cricket once a week for most of his career so his body isn't a worry.

"I don't see it as a backwards step that Beau Casson is gone. This is a tour of India and they have really good players of spin and we don't want to ruin anyone," he added.

McGain, who has played only 19 first-class matches and taken 57 wickets at 33, was yesterday named as Australia's frontline spinner for the arduous four-Test tour of India and will partner rookie Tasmanian off-spinner Jason Krejza in a 15-man squad.

He is set to become Australia's oldest Test debutant in 24 years.

Meanwhile, Warne has said that for-

mer team-mate Andrew Symonds showed a lack of respect to the Australian team in Darwin last month, but he has urged the all-rounder not to take the easy option by exiting the international game. Symonds was cut from the one-day series against Bangladesh for going fishing instead of attending a team meeting and was not included in the squad to face India next month.

Warne was upset Symonds, who has been around the team for a decade, did not act like a senior player while the injured pair of Ricky Ponting and Matthew Hayden were missing from the squad. It was left to Michael Clarke, the acting captain, and team management to make the decision to send Symonds home.

"I would have thought that if Andrew Symonds and Michael Clarke were good friends, then Symo would have more respect for Michael Clarke than that," Warne said in the Herald Sun. "I think it's disappointing that he put a young captain like Michael Clarke in that position.

"It was disappointing from Symo, especially with the Australian team not having senior players like Ricky Ponting and Matthew Hayden there. It's not a one-off thing, and I just think Symo has showed a lack of respect."

However, Warne said he did not want Symonds to walk away and focus instead on the Indian Premier League. Symonds trained with Matthew Hayden in Brisbane last week and is waiting to



make a decision on whether to be part of Queensland's start to the domestic season next month.

"I would be disappointed if he took the easy option and just threw it away," Warne said. "He could do that and just take his cash from the IPL, but to me

that would be the easy option. The hard option and the option that will satisfy him and earn him some respect is to come back a better person and show how important playing for Australia is to him."



FIFA President Sepp Blatter, left, and South African President Thabo Mbeki, right, are seen at a press briefing in Pretoria, South Africa, Sunday, Sept. 14, 2008. (AP Photo/Denis Farrell)

## FIFA head Sepp Blatter visits 2010 stadium

by Clare Nullis

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) - FIFA president Sepp Blatter claims he danced for joy after arriving in South Africa to check on preparations for the 2010 World Cup.

Yet, beneath the public posturing lie very real concerns about stadium construction delays, rising costs, rampant crime and lack of transportation.

Blatter was visiting Cape Town's Green Point stadium Monday on the first full day of his four-day visit, which will also include tours of Soccer City in Johannesburg, the site of the opening and final match.

He is also set to meet South Africa's likely next President, Jacob Zuma, and anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela, whose lobbying helped bring the tournament to South Africa.

"South Africa is on track," FIFA general-secretary Jerome Valcke told a local radio station Monday. "But it's sure there is no way that South Africa can lose a single day in preparation for the (2009) Confederations Cup and the World Cup because we are already on a tight schedule."

## Homan gets even in wheelchair tennis doubles

BELJING (AP) - Korie Homan had to wait a day, but she finally got even with Esther Vergeer.

Homan and Sharon Walraven won gold in wheelchair tennis at the Paralympics on Monday, defeating Dutch compatriots Jiske Griffioen and Vergeer 2-6, 7-6 (4), 6-4.

Vergeer beat Homan in

Sunday's singles final, a match Homan felt she should have won.

"I was really disappointed because I had match point against the player who hadn't lost in a long, long time," Homan said. "Today I cried again, but that was because I was so happy."

Vergeer is undefeated

in 349 straight singles matches over 5 1/2 years and her Paralympic gold in singles was her third straight. She had also won doubles at the last two Paralympics.

"When we started in the warmup, I had to switch a button and go for doubles," Homan said.

Fifty-one medals were up for grabs Monday. The Paralympics wind down Tuesday with the final day on Wednesday.

China and Ukraine were the only countries to win two gold medals in swimming, with the rest spread around. China also dominated track and field, winning six golds and 11 overall. No other country was close. The United States won one gold and seven overall.

Oscar Pistorius, the South African runner known as "The Blade Runner," goes for his third gold Tuesday in the 400 meters, having already won the 100 and 200.



Netherlands' Korie Homan, right, and Sharon Walraven congratulate each other after receiving the gold medals for the Wheelchair tennis Women's doubles open final at the Beijing 2008 Paralympic Games held in Beijing, China, Monday, Sept. 15, 2008.

(AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

## Francisco, Madusanka and Karunaratne steer Kurunegala to eight-wicket win

by Reemus Fernando

Wicket keeper and batsman, Lio Francisco scored an unbeaten 43 runs and accounted for three dismissals for Kurunegala District to record an easy eight wickets victory over Anuradhapura District after Ashan Madusanka and skipper Nimna Karunaratne earned bowling honours in the curtain raiser of the Prima Champions Cup Under-15 tournament held at the Welagedara Stadium yesterday.

Deciding to bat first, skipper Eranda Edirisinghe's 35 and Tharindu Weerasinghe's 43 runs were the top scores for Anuradhapura who were bowled out in the 42nd over. Leg spinner Ashan Madusanka (4/17) of Sandalankawa MMV and skipper Nimna Karunaratne (3/11) of Maliyadeva College shared seven



Under 15 District Cricket Tournament

wickets between them to restrict the opponents to 120 runs.

Chasing the paltry target Kurunegala gave away just two wickets but Lio Francisco of Maliyadeva College top scored with an unbeaten 43 runs inclusive of seven fours to reach the target with many overs to spare. Francisco too accounted for two stumpings and one that caught behind the wickets.

Kurunegala District team captained by Nimna Karunaratne was comprised of players from Maliyadeva College, Kurunegala, St. Anne's College, Kurunegala and Sandalankawa MV. Eranda Edirisinghe

(Anuradhapura Central) who lead Anuradhapura District team was inclusive of players from Anuradhapura Central, Niwaththaka Chethiya MV, Walisinghe Harischandra MV, St. Joseph's MV,

Deepani MV, Nochchiyagama Vidyadharsha, Thalawa Navodya and Subodhi MV.

Scores: Anuradhapura 120 all out in 41.2 overs (Tharindu Weerasinghe 43, Eranda Edirisinghe 35, Rangana Madusanka 22, Ashan Madusanka 4/17, Nimna Karunaratne 3/11). Kurunegala 121 for 2 in 20.3 overs (Lio Francisco 43 n.o, Avishka Ratnayake 32, Charith Hurukkgamuwa 26 n.o, Madushanka Jayamal 2/32).

The tournament will progress with a card of three matches today. Matale vs. Anuradhapura at Welagedara Stadium. Ratnapura vs. Gampaha at St. Sebastian's College Ground, Katuneriya Vavuniya vs. Trinco at Dambulla International Cricket Grounds.

## Bangladeshi players complain of poor treatment

The Bangladesh players linked to the Indian Cricket League have expressed dissatisfaction with the system as their reason to retire from international and domestic cricket. However, they stopped short of confirming they had signed with the ICL.

Habibul Bashar, the former Bangladesh captain, said he felt let down by the team management, coach Jamie Siddons in particular. "The situation was getting difficult for me," Bashar, who was dropped from the side for the Asia Cup, told the Dhaka-based Daily Star. "I wasn't receiving support from anyone. Even the coach's attitude was discouraging and I was in the middle of a lot of uncertainty and I was out of cricket for seven months." He said this prompted him to take up the ICL offer, adding none of the players were happy with the existing structure.

Siddons had responded saying Bashar was not on the top of his game and had been omitted after many opportunities. "A non-performing senior can't really influence the game of his teammates," Siddons said. "We would not leave a senior player out of our young team if they had the potential to be a match-winner or be in our team come the next World Cup."

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