

## Briefs

**German Court: No Black Market Re-sales**

FRANKFURT (Reuters)—Fans who sell World Cup tickets on the black market will find their transactions vetoed by the German Soccer Federation (DFB) after a court ruling last week.

This issue reached a Frankfurt regional court after a soccer fan bought two

World Cup tickets online in September for 880 euros (\$1,087), eight times their original price.

The DFB has vowed to fight black market ticket sales and refused at the time to transfer the tickets to the name of the new purchaser. This prompted the original ticket holder to file a lawsuit against the federation.

The court ruled in favor of the DFB, upholding its right to reject such transfers. It said the original ticket holder could have returned the tickets if he did not want them.

Only the person named on each ticket will be allowed access to the stadiums when the month-long World Cup kicks off on June 9, for security reasons.

**Brazil Says Germany Favorites in World Cup**

RIO DE JANEIRO (Reuters)—Brazil coach Carlos Alberto Parreira believes hosts Germany rather than his own team are favorites to win the World Cup.

"In fact, I think Germany are bigger favorites. They've played in seven finals, including three in a row (1982, 1986 and 1990) and they have the fans on their side."

Parreira added that his players had to forget about their celebrity status and work hard if they were to keep the trophy they won for a fifth time in 2002.

"Talent is not enough at a World Cup. We have to have emotion, an amateur spirit, and play with our hearts," he said.

"The players must forget that they are celebrities, with good contracts. We have to make them understand that here in Brazil there are nearly 200 million fans.

"People want Ronaldinho to do the same for us that he does for Barcelona, but they have to remember that we haven't seen him for eight months," said Parreira.

World Player of the Year Ronaldinho, has not played for his country since their match against the United Arab Emirates last November. He missed a friendly against Russia in February due to injury.

On his own future, Parreira said the only chance of continuing as Brazil coach would be if they won the tournament this July.

"There's only one possibility to continue as coach. You have to be world champion. I have never seen a coach fail to win the World Cup and stay on here in Brazil."

**Morrison to Skip Last Year for the NBA**

SEATTLE (Reuters)—Gonzaga scoring machine Adam Morrison announced last week that he would skip his senior season to enter the NBA Draft.

Morrison, the nation's leading scorer at 28.1 points per game, will likely be a top-10 pick in the June 28 draft.

"I feel I'm ready," Morrison told a news conference on the school's campus in Spokane, Wash. "A lot of other people feel I'm ready so it was the right move for me, and my family."

The 21-year-old Morrison set Gonzaga single-season marks for points (926), field goals made (306) and free throws made (240) this year.

"A lot of kids, once they hear the NBA and the type of money that comes along with it, they automatically want to go," Morrison said. "You've got to make sure you're ready for it. And prepare yourself to be ready for it."

# Cricket Growing Fast in Canada

TORONTO (Reuters)—Cricket, once as Canadian as maple syrup, is making an overdue comeback.

"Cricket was the national game of Canada in the past and I predict that it will be again," said the Canadian Cricket Association's (CCA) first vice-president Howard Petrook.

"The cricket-playing community in Canada is growing so rapidly that as demographics change Canada cricket is going to become more and more important," he said in an interview at the Toronto Cricket, Skating and Curling Club.

"Cricket is the fastest-growing sport in Canadian schools. There are literally scores and scores of schools playing cricket."

Although this news may surprise ice hockey fans, cricket has a long history in Canada. There are references to matches being played near Montreal more than 200 years ago while the Toronto Cricket Club was established in 1827, and the Canadian Cricket Association was formed in 1892.

The next 12 months could prove the most important period in cricket's existence in Canada. Canada, as an associate member of the sport's governing body the International Cricket Council (ICC), has gained the coveted One-Day International (ODI) match status, appointed a new team coach and begun preparations for next year's World Cup in Caribbean.

Elevation to ODI status will mean Canada plays more international games in an already busy season, explained Petrook, who added that the country had only one ODI-rated ground but was working with the ICC to certify more.

**Days Off**

Another challenge will be the extra demands made on the amateur team.

"If you were playing for Canada last



**COMING TO CANADA:** New Zealand's batsman Hamish Marshall ducks to avoid a shot delivered by South Africa's Makhaya Ntini during New Zealand's second inning April 18. Popular around the world, cricket is poised to surpass ice hockey as Canada's new No. 1 sport.

year you would have needed 40 days off work. In the next 12 months, I estimate it will be 60 days."

One change that is likely to be a big boost is the year-long appointment of England under-19 team head Andy Pick as Canada's coach. With 11 months until the World Cup, Pick's sabbatical from his job with the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) seems to have come at the right time for Canada.

"I think there is a lot of keen anticipation," said Petrook about Pick's

appointment. "We were looking for someone who has the knowledge, the expertise and the technical ability."

Former Nottinghamshire bowler Pick was due to fly to Toronto on Sunday with his wife Jennie and 12-year-old ice-hockey-playing son Greg, to take up the only full-time, salaried role in Canadian cricket.

"I was pleased to get the job and I'm looking forward to the challenge for sure," said Pick speaking from England in a telephone inter-

view before his departure.

"I've got a stack of ideas which I'd like to implement and I'm sure that when I get there I'm going to be told that quite a few of them aren't feasible, due to the geography of the country, due to finance. I'm going over there with a wish list of things I'd like to do."

Pick said that over and above guiding Canada through a busy schedule of one-day internationals, he would also be looking to introduce "systems and pathways" for coach edu-

cation, examining ways to develop teenage players through to the national side and focusing on improving playing surfaces—all things he believes could help to drive Canada to the next World Cup qualification competition in 2009.

**Good Time**

Pick said he might choose to coach Canada for longer than the initial year's contract.

"It would come down to the fact that if I was offered a longer-term contract and we were having a good time in Canada then I would have to make a decision to give up my job at the ECB and we'd go from there. As it stands at the moment it (the contract) is a year."

Pick's knowledge is likely to prove invaluable for the World Cup as Canada faces England, New Zealand and Kenya in their group.

Canada hopes to improve on their first visit to the World Cup in 2003, when the team's highlight was a 60-run victory over Bangladesh in Durban, South Africa.

"The way I'm looking at it at the moment and the impression that I'm getting from the people in Canada is that I think the World Cup is the icing on the cake and I think that realistically we go to the World Cup in the hope of putting on a good performance against England and New Zealand—and hopefully beating Kenya," said Pick.

Pick said he would not be measuring Canadian success on a victory against England, calling it "not hugely important in the bigger scheme of things."

"If we were to beat England in the World Cup that would be fantastic but were we then not to qualify for the next World Cup and lose ICC funding, that would have a far more dramatic effect on Canadian cricket," he said.

## King Pleads With Wimbledon for Equal Money

WASHINGTON (Reuters)—Tennis champion and pioneer Billie Jean King pleaded last week for Wimbledon officials to offer equal prize money for men and women.

"It's just the right thing to do in the 21st century," King said. "The people in power can do whatever they want. But I would hope they would find it in their hearts and minds."

The All England Club has traditionally offered men more prize money than women for the Wimbledon championships, which is the last of the Grand Slam tournaments to hold out.

Last year, women's winner Venus Williams earned about 30,000 pounds (\$53,000) less than men's champion Roger Federer.

"Let's get on with it and be a team,"

she said. "Tennis is one of the few sports where the men and women are really high profile. Women's tennis is the leader in women's sports."

Wimbledon officials will announce their prize money for the 2006 championships this week but have given no indication that the disparity will change.

King, a key figure in establishing the women's tennis tour in the 1970s, discounted the argument that men got paid more because they play best-of-five sets while the women play best-of-three.

"We have always been willing to do that," she said. "That is their decision not to let us play three out of five sets. And how about everybody playing two out of three? That would really be

helpful."

But, King said, the number of sets should not determine the amount of prize money.

"Entertainers don't get paid by the hour," she said. "They get paid, period. If Elton John does a concert, it could last one hour or four hours, it's a done deal."

"The last time I checked, from the Round of 16, quarter-finals on, women's matches are sold out just as the men's matches are sold out," he told Reuters.

Scott said Wimbledon made 25 million pounds last year and the gap in prize money between the sexes was just \$450,000 "so obviously it's a social and political statement being made."

Wimbledon officials could not be reached for comment.

King, 62, said she was tired of fighting the same issue year after year.

"But we're not going to let up," she said. "We're just asking to do the right thing. Before I die I just want to see every major tournament have equal prize money."



**REACH:** Aiko Nakamura of Japan returns the ball against Tímea Bacszinsky of Switzerland at Ariake Coliseum on April 22, in Tokyo, Japan.



**DOWN SOUTH WIN:** Fred Rodriguez of the USA, riding for Davitamon Lotto, celebrates as he crosses the finish line ahead of Matteo Tosatto of Italy, on the right in second, and riding for Quick Step; and Yaroslav Popovych of the Ukraine, left in third, and riding for the Discovery Channel; to win Stage Four of the 2006 Tour de Georgia on April 21.