

# SPORT

## Victory keeps play-off dream alive

It was a great result for us to get a win on Saturday and it really keeps us in the play-off hunt.

Beating Millwall keeps the dream alive. We now need to win our remaining games and will need one or two other results to go our way but finishing in the top six is still a possibility.

We needed to win that game (against Millwall) and it was great to do so, even if we didn't play that well in the second half.

It was a little disappointing that we couldn't match our first half performance after the break but we held and that was the important thing.

There was not much said about me starting this game after a few matches on the bench but I sensed all week that I was going to get the start.

The game against Millwall was pretty much our last chance and I had a feeling that he (manager Steve Coppell) was going to go with his experienced side which I knew would mean my chance – football is funny like that.

For me it was just a normal game. I didn't really feel any pressure. I have been in this position before and getting flustered and anxious isn't going to help.

There was a lot said in the build-up about this being our last chance and how only a win would be enough to keep us in the hunt.

But you can't play a match like that. When are you desperate from the first minute, you can't really play properly.

### ON THE BALL

WITH SHAUN GOATER



If all you are worried about is not making a mistake, then you are never going to be able to settle. Millwall were always going to be tough opponents and they are not a bad side – as they have shown in their FA Cup run which has taken them all the way to the final.

And we couldn't afford to play like that in a match as important as this. I just went out there to do what I had to do.

I didn't get caught up with all the newspaper talk and all that, I just prepared in my usual way and went out there to do my thing.

It was nice to get a goal but it is the result that matters and it doesn't matter who scored.

The gaffer didn't say anything to me afterwards, but I didn't really expect him to.

I scored the goal, but that is my job. As long as the team wins, it doesn't matter how it happens. Managers only really talk about it when it is a goal in a play-off game that takes you through.

I expect I will probably start again in the next game

(against already promoted West Bromwich Albion) and that is another one we really have to win.

Going out all guns blazing isn't the way to do it but the bottom line is that we need all three points on Saturday and that is what we will play for.

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Kyle (Lightbourne) was around at my place a couple of weeks ago and we were talking about the World Cup thing and playing for Bermuda.

He said that he was feeling fit and really wanted to help out and I think it is a very good thing that he has got involved again. Kyle has a lot to offer because of his experience as a professional footballer and I think the rest of the team will benefit from having him in the set-up.

The trip down to Central America is definitely a good idea as it will be a good chance for all the players to get an idea of what football down there is going to be like, but Kyle's input will be invaluable.

We have a strong young team and it is always good to have some old heads around to share what they have been through in their careers. I think it benefits everyone and will help with the build-up to the El Salvador game.

There is a good feeling around Bermuda at the moment because of the World Cup fever – I sensed that when I came back for the Nicaragua game – and I hope that continues during this tour to prepare for the second round qualifying game.

## Two-day cricket – 'it's up to the clubs to make it work'

By Gayle Alleyne

National coach Mark Harper says two elements are important for the reintroduction of two-day cricket to be successful.

First, the structure must be geared to reap maximum benefit and, secondly, all clubs must buy into the new format.

"Two-day cricket is crucial to Bermuda if we are really serious about development," said Harper. "Two-day cricket must be part of the programme but it's important the format provides players with the opportunity to have a different mindset and approach to the game."

"Just having a two-day game is not going to help our development unless it's structured to provide as much opportunity as possible for batsmen to build innings or for bowlers to develop their craft," he noted following a vote last Thursday by Bermuda Cricket Board (BCB) members to experiment with two-day games again.

Explaining his thinking, Harper reasoned that for players to appreciate fully the developmental aspects of two-day cricket, on-field play should be "complemented by effective training programmes and discussions about good tactics and things like that" as part of the overall structural support.

He called on all clubs to embrace the two-day game, saying that unless "all clubs are committed to it I don't think we will be able to achieve the objectives we're striving for".

The former Guyana national player outlined positives for both batsmen and bowlers once two-day cricket was properly utilised.

Regarding batsmen, he pointed out, it gave them an opportunity "to be more constructive in their innings; the way they put their innings together and to have more selective strokeplay".

"They need to pick up the ones and twos – you know, working the ball around in the gaps – and work in partnerships instead of going crash, bang, wallop. Teams must look to bat longer."

He said it would also give bowlers – the young ones in particular – an opportunity to develop their craft.

There could however be, he cautioned, a worrisome flipside if teams did not go about things in a proper manner.

"Some captains could depend on their experienced and successful bowlers and that could work against the development of young bowlers.

"For instance, you will have more overs now and that would give captains the option of bowling their best bowlers for more overs instead of encouraging a young bowler to develop. So things like that have to be looked at.

"Everybody would be trying to win but, at the same time, captains must be careful they give young bowlers with potential a chance to develop instead of just relying on two or three bowlers to operate for a whole day," said Harper.

Other challenges facing two-day cricket, he believed would be the availability of players and umpires as well as "getting quality pitches that last two days".

"Those are serious things that would need to be addressed," he told *The Royal Gazette*.

As for whether the two-day results should be combined with those from the limited-overs format for one set of league standings or whether they should be kept separate, the national coach offered this opinion.

"They are two different competitions (so) you have to have two different standings. But, you must come up with something that's going to provide a good yardstick for how you're going to decide promotion and relegation.

"That's the challenge now – to come up with that system because you're playing two different competitions."

## Mega squash deal sealed

### Bermuda to host lucrative Masters Championship

By Dan Rutstein

The biggest deal in squash history has been signed – and it will bring the very best in the sport to Bermuda for the next three years.

Following the success of the Bermuda Open, tournament organisers have put pen to paper on a \$350,000 deal that will see the Professional Squash Association Masters Championships come to the Island in 2005 and 2006 followed by the World Open Championships the following year.

Prize money of \$100,000 will be offered for the next two years with the 2007 championship offering a \$150,000 purse – one of the largest prizes ever to be competed for on the Island.

And in what could prove to be a massive coup for one of Bermuda's two pros, the organisers have managed to persuade the PSA to break with the tradition of only inviting the top 32 players in the world to the tournament and have allowed a single 'wildcard' entry.

This could be filled by either Nick Kyme, who got a wildcard this year and is ranked 80 in the world, or James Stout, based in Belgium, who is ranked 148.

Stephen Young, President of the Bermuda Squash Racquets Association, told *The Royal Gazette*: "We are absolutely delighted and honoured to have been chosen as the venue for the PSA Masters in 2005 and 2006, and the PSA World Open Championship in 2007.

"These are the absolute premier events in squash and it shows that the PSA must have been very impressed by our ability to put on major tournaments.

"Bermuda has long been known as a first class tourist destination and we are going to ensure that everyone who comes to the Island for these events will enjoy both a warm welcome and wonderful squash."

Tournament chairman Kim Carter and director Ross Triffitt, both flew to Qatar over the weekend where it was officially announced that Bermuda would be the next hosts of the PSA Masters Championships.

"We are very pleased to say there was a tremendous buzz of excitement in Qatar when we announced the biggest deal in the history of professional squash," said Triffitt, immediately after the ceremony in the desert paradise.

"We have been overwhelmed by the exceptional hospitality of the Qatar Squash Federation, thanks to President Nabil Ali Bin Ali and Tournament Director Hisham Algosaihi. They have proved to us that it will be a hard act to follow to host the PSA Masters to the same standard of the Qatar Squash Federation, but it is a challenge that we look forward to."

With a BSRA membership of nearly 600, Bermuda boasts more squash players per capita than anywhere else in the world and has long held an unnaturally important position on the squash map despite its size.

Former world champion Rodney Isles lived here and David Palmer, a finalist in this year's Bermuda Open and a former world number one, is also a resident.

Exhibition matches and tournaments have long drawn top class players, although this year's tournament, which offered \$56,000 in prize money, attracted eight of the world's top ten to a specially-constructed all-glass court at Bermuda High School.

The PSA Masters is the second most prestigious squash tournament on the PSA calendar, ranked only behind the PSA World Open, and could be compared with the PGA Masters in golf – entry has always been restricted to the top 32 players in the world as determined by their rankings at the end of December.

The 2004 PSA Masters was held in Qatar this weekend where Peter Nicol, who beat Kyme here, defeated Palmer in the final.



The big one's on its way: Qatar PSA Masters Tournament Director Hisham Algosaiabi (left) at the official ceremony to mark Bermuda's hosting of the leading event with Bermuda's Tournament Chairman Kim Carter and Director Ross Triffitt.

## Island sailors off to a fast start

### INTERNATIONAL RACE WEEK

International Race Week enjoyed another day of superb conditions yesterday with the multi-national fleet sailing under clear skies and a steady breeze of between eight to 12 knots.

And at the end of the second day of the week-long regatta, it was Bermuda's own sailors who were leading the way in six of the eight classes.

Bermuda competitors were particularly dominant in the dinghy classes.

Chuck Millican leads the 505 class, one point ahead of Craig Davis, while Brett Wright is atop the 18-boat Laser class, ahead of Maryland's Bob Tan.

Comet ace Stevie Dickinson,

meanwhile, has the edge over long-time rival Gladwin Lambert, and among the Snipes, Malcolm Smith leads Canadian Gordon Fleming.

Other local competitors who have enjoyed a fast start to the Bacardi-sponsored event include Adam Barboza and Mike Lewis.

Barboza, in Martin Cloutier's *Addiction*, has so far posted two seconds and two firsts in the J-105s – he had one of each in yesterday's two races in the Great Sound – for a total of six points.

Tied five points behind are Bermuda's Glenn Astwood, at

the helm of *Passion*, and Californian Tom Coates in *Masquerade*. Astwood had a fourth and a first yesterday while Coates sailed to two third place finishes in the six-boat entry.

Lewis is tied for first in the J-24 class with Great Britain's Stuart Jardine – both with 11 points.

After opening with a second and a third on Sunday, Lewis continued his good form yesterday with a first and fifth in the 11-boat J-24 fleet. Jardine posted a second and fourth yesterday.

## BCB ready to launch new season

By Colin Zuill

### CRICKET

Bermuda's 2004 cricket season will get underway this Sunday with a full slate of limited overs matches scheduled in both the Premier and First Division, Bermuda Cricket Board (BCB) confirmed yesterday.

But with a number of pitches still not ready, it remains to be seen how many games will actually start.

Board official Neil Speight said that a schedule had already been circulated to clubs but was not yet available for general release because of the uncertainty over the readiness of pitches.

It's understood that the East End clubs – St. George's, St. David's and Bailey's Bay, as

well as Southampton Rangers, have all indicated that their grounds are ready to host the first matches of the season.

However, a question mark remains over the likes of Somerset CC, White Hill Field, Police Field and Devonshire Recreation Club, who it's believed, need more time to prepare their wickets.

The much talked about return of two-day cricket, said Speight, would come later in the season after the Board's Technical Committee have had time to sort out the exact format.

"We had a special general meeting two

weeks ago with clubs to talk about proposals and format which incorporated two-day cricket and the response was quite positive," said Speight.

"We now have a new format that is going to incorporate four two-day games for both the Premier and First Division. The Technical Committee, which had drafted the two-day proposal, will meet this week or next to incorporate some suggestions that came from the floor during the special meeting. They will ratify those with the umpires before we publish the final points structure for the two-day games."

The one-day 50-overs fixtures this season will see each team in the two divisions play each other only once.