

**Fight to the death**

REUTERS, London

Sheffield United will be cast in their favourite role of party pooper in the first division play-off final against Wolverhampton Wanderers in Cardiff on Monday.

Wolves are one of soccer's most famous and oldest clubs, having won the league championship four times, the FA Cup three times and the League Cup twice.

But their last success was a League Cup win in 1980 and they have not been in the top flight for 19 years, during which time their fans have endured more than their fair share of heartache.

Last season Wolves were top of the table with seven games remaining but finished third, pipped to the second automatic promotion spot by fierce local rivals West Bromwich Albion.

Wolves then lost in the playoff semi-finals to Norwich and it proved almost too much to bear for the club's supporters and their benefactor and chairman Jack Hayward.

This season, though, manager Dave Jones has moulded together a more experienced side containing ex-Manchester

United players Paul Ince and Denis Irwin and some excellent forwards in Kenny Miller, George Ndash, Dean Sturridge and Nathan Blake.

After a mediocre start they established themselves in the top six and proved too good for Reading in the play-off semifinals, winning both legs for a 3-1 aggregate win.

**Sorenstam's**

FROM PAGE 13

The 32-year-old Swede, the first female player to compete in a PGA Tour event since Babe Zaharias took part in the 1945 Los Angeles Open, finished five-over on 145, four shots shy of the cut line.

"It's been a lot of pressure, a lot of emotion," Sorenstam told reporters. "I want to come back tomorrow though."

"But I gave it all. I tried. I gave everything I had."

Kenny Perry and Dan Forsman shared the lead on 132, eight under. Sorenstam's playing partners Dean Wilson and Aaron Barber were on 138 and 146 respectively.

"I won't reconsider," said Sorenstam when asked if she would try playing on the PGA Tour again. "I'm very thankful and honoured to have been here but I know where I belong."

"I'm going to go back with all the experience that I learned this week and I want to win tournaments. I want to set records and this week here is going to help me to do that."

**Dreamt of it**

FROM PAGE 13

friends were shocked at me getting picked so they couldn't get the days off work."

He added that the pitch at Lord's had also been in his favour. "After playing at Headingley it was nice to play on a wicket that didn't go up and down."

And after having had a taste of Test cricket McGrath was eager for more. "This is where I want to be but the hard work starts now."

**Williams primed for collision course**



AFP, Paris

Serena and Venus Williams were on course for another Grand Slam final showdown when the draw for the French Open was made here on Friday.

Serena, winner of the last four Grand Slam tournaments, is in the top half of the draw and will go up against experienced German Barbara Rittner, while Venus, who has yet to win in Paris, is in the bottom half opening against a qualifier.

Second seed Kim Clijsters of Belgium will start with a tough tie against dangerous American Amy Frazier and will need to defeat both Williams one after the other if they all reach the semifinals.

The projected last 16 would see Serena take on Ai Sugiyama of Japan, Venus play Russia's Elena Dementieva and Clijsters play Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria.

Fourth seed Justine Henin-Hardenne of Belgium would meet Eleni Daniilidou of Greece and should have little trouble making the last eight from her second quarter of the draw.

Home hope Amelie Mauresmo opens with a tester against up-and-coming compatriot Virginie Razzano.

Mauresmo, out to give the French only their third women's title in 36 years - Mary Pierce won in 2000 and Francoise Durr back in 1967 - has been in red-hot form recently, the 23-year-old beating both the Williams' sisters in the last month.

But the expectations of the home crowd have often told against her - not least in 2001 when German Jana Kandarr, 56th in the world, beat her 7-5, 7-5 in the first round.

That is now behind her but she will have to get the better of Serena in the last eight if she is to have a hope of emulating Pierce.

Marat Safin may be sitting the men's event out with injury but his sister Dinara Safina is in action. However, she will have her work cut out having been drawn against 11th-seeded compatriot Anastasia Myskina in the opening round.

Jennifer Capriati, seeded seven and the 2001 champion, opens against Joannette Kruger of South Africa.

She would then face either Paraguayan Rossana Neffa-de Los Rios or Frechwoman Marion Bartoli.

Three-time champion Monica Seles is in the same part of the draw as Capriati and starts off with a match against Russian Nadia Petrova.



A combo of the five top seeded women tennis players who are taking part in this year's French Open. They are (clockwise, starting from the top) US Serena Williams (No. 1), Kim Clijsters of Belgium (No. 2), Justine Henin of Belgium (No. 4), Amelie Mauresmo of France (No. 5) and US Venus Williams (No. 3).

**French fragrance**



AFP, Paris

The French Open, for eight decades the almost regal scene of tennis legends, begins Monday, heralding the climax of the clay-court season before the top stars are put out to grass.

The tournament, whose prestige is now without equal, began life in 1891 in the more modest guise of the French championships.

But a name change to the "championnats internationaux de France" in 1925 and then the construction of the Garros venue three years later changed everything.

Cue the arrival centre stage of one of the biggest sports events on the international calendar - and the focal point of the French sporting summer - the Tour de France notwithstanding.

Although a certain H Briggs won the first ever championship in 1891, outlasting P Baigneres of France to give Britain one of only two titles (Fred Perry won in 1935) the host nation would dominate until 1933, when John Crawford broke Australia's duck beating defending champion Henri Cochet.

Donald Budge put the United States on the winners' roll-call in 1938 before World War II intervened. Helen Wills had already taken the women's trophy back to the USA with a 1928 win over Britain's Eileen Bennett.

Home favourite Suzanne Lenglen wrote her name into the history books with six wins in seven years through to 1926 and her memory lingers on in the imposing shape of the Court Suzanne Lenglen.

But come the immediate post-war period and having opened the door to allcomers, the French, for whom Max Decugis had stacked up a record eight men's titles between 1903 and 1914, were no longer having things their own way.

Wills, by then Helen Wills-Moody, completed the first non-French hat-trick of crowns in 1930 and then Germany's Hilde Sperling repeated the feat between 1935 and 1937.

**Gaibandha football**

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Jhanker Krira Chakka defeated Abahani Krira Chakka 1-0 goal in the Gaibandha Senior Division Soccer League match held at Islamia High School ground yesterday.

Not even Steffi Graf would manage that, despite taking six titles in all from 1987 to 1999 - but Yugoslav-born Monica Seles would, and on two occasions at Graf's expense, from 1990 to 1992.

Current world number one Lleyton Hewitt, who has never been beyond the last eight, can take heart from his compatriots' record - which was unmatched through the 1960s.

Ken Rosewall and Lewis Hoad had taken the title in the mid 1950s before Rod Laver and Roy Emerson won it in 1962 and 63. Manuel Santana snatched a win for Spain a year later but Fred Stolle, Roach, Emerson, Rosewall and Laver gave the Aussies five triumphs on the trot to see out the decade which had seen the game turn professional.

The 1968 edition of Garros was actually the first ever Open event.

That signalled a move towards more on-court glamour and glitz as the extravagant talent of showmen such as the outrageously gifted Romanian Ilie Nastase emerged to win the title in 1973 and American golden girl Chris Evert wowed the crowd with her looks - not to mention seven titles between 1974 and 1986.

The Australian women also posted a winning streak similar to that of their male counterparts in the 1960s.

Margaret Smith, Lesley Turner won twice each between 1962 and 65 before Smith, by then Margaret Smith-Court, added three more and Evonne Goolagong another for the ladies from Down Under.

But it was a nordic star who would epitomise the late 1970s and early 80s - Sweden's Bjorn Borg winning a modern-era record six crowns and sparking a fashion of headband-clad wannabes - to say nothing of special edition stamps showing him, racquet in hand, in places as far flung as Ivory Coast.

Yannick Noah likewise had flowing locks and gave France their date last men's title in 1983 by defeating defending champion Mats Wilander - the Swede who had picked up Borg's baton and who would lift the trophy three

times in all.

Great moments have abounded year after year at the venue as generations of stars have conjured sporting artistry - but also waged wars of attrition on the slow, red clay at the Porte D'Auteuil on the western edge of Paris, the 'City of Light'.

The Garros Stadium, named after a French World War I aviator who in 1913 became the first man to fly across the Mediterranean, was created in fact for the Davis Cup after France had snatched it from the United States in 1927.

But it soon became the focus for the French Open in an era where the French were still the dominant tennis power, Henri Cochet winning the first final at the new stadium by seeing off fellow 'Muskeeteer' and Davis Cup teammate Rene Lacoste.

In more recent times, Borg's fourth straight win at the expense of Czech Ivan Lendl remains in the memory for its five sets and 3hr 13min of top drawer claycourt wizardry.

Then there was the totally unexpected triumph of Michael Chang, at 17 the youngest ever men's champion when the US teen outslugged Swede Stefan Edberg in another contest which went the full distance.

The samba drums arrived in 1997 for Gustavo Kuerten's maiden win Sergi Bruguera of Spain, twice a former champion.

'Guga' would go onto lift further titles in 2000 and 2001 - he won in Millennium Year on his ninth match point in a tension-soaked encounter with Magnus Norman - and this year wants a fourth.

The women's 2001 final between Jennifer Capriati and Belgian Kim Clijsters was a titanic tussle, the American edging it 12-10 in the decider.

But for sheer emotion and drama, how about Andre Agassi's march into history at the expense of Andrei Medvedev in 1999, the Las Vegas coming back from two sets down to complete his Grand Slam title collection - one of only five men to do so but the first ever

to manage the feat on three different surfaces.

And to think that less than two years before his world ranking had slumped to 141. By the end of 1999 he would top the end of season rankings for the first time.

It all made such a difference from 1990, when Agassi had managed to lose to Ecuador's Andres Gomez.

Agassi blinked away the tears that day as he made his trademark bow to all corners of the stadium - then went off to the champions dinner with a certain Steffi Graf, who had sent packing a tantrum-throwing Martina Hingis.

Something must have clicked as the pair looked at the famous trophies they had collected.

Soon afterwards they began a courtship which led to marriage in October 2001.

They'd both made more than their share of history on court and now it was time for a 'histoire d'amour.'

**A launch pad**

FROM PAGE 13

Previously Australia hosted the inaugural World Youth Cup. South Africa organised it in 1998 and Sri Lanka in 2000.

The 16-team meet will feature the 10 full members of the ICC and Kenya, who had a dream run in the World Cup. Besides, the rest will be decided from the five regional associate member qualifiers.

There will be 54 games. The format will be same as the last four editions. The sixteen teams will split into four groups will play in the first phase from where the top eight will qualify for the Super Series to battle it out for the Cup. While the bottom eight will play for the Plate.

"We are planning to hold the first round matches in Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong and Rajshahi. After the first round the Cup matches will be held in Dhaka and the Plate games in Chittagong," said Roquibul.



AFP, Paris

Lleyton Hewitt and Andre Agassi were Friday both given easy draws

Three-times former winner Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil was given a tougher task going up against giant Swiss veteran Marc Rousset, while title-holder Albert Costa takes on a qualifier.

Top ties included last year's beaten finalist Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain against Michel Kratochvil of Switzerland, home hope Arnaud Clement against Swedish star Thomas Enqvist and an all-American clash between James Blake and Taylor Dent.

If all goes according to plan, Hewitt would meet up with Kuerten in the last 16, Agassi would

for the first round of the French Open which gets underway here on Monday.

Top-seeded Hewitt is down to play Brian Vahaly of the United States while Agassi, the second seed, meets Karol Beck of Slovakia.

Three-times former winner Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil was given a tougher task going up against giant Swiss veteran Marc Rousset, while title-holder Albert Costa takes on a qualifier.

Top ties included last year's beaten finalist Juan Carlos Ferrero of Spain against Michel Kratochvil of Switzerland, home hope Arnaud Clement against Swedish star Thomas Enqvist and an all-American clash between James Blake and Taylor Dent.

If all goes according to plan, Hewitt would meet up with Kuerten in the last 16, Agassi would

have to get past Argentine seed Gaston Gaudio beforehand - not an easy draw given Kuerten's current form.

First of all the Latin American has to beat Marc Rosset of Switzerland.

If Ferrero, the Monte Carlo champion, sees off Kratochvil, he could come up against 200 finalist Magnus Norman of Sweden, who first has to get past Chilean Nicolas Massu.

And then the Spaniard could tussle with Britain's 25th seed Tim Henman, who starts off against Vladimir Voltchkov of Belarus.

Roger Federer, Swiss fifth seed and one of a clutch of players who could go all the way, start off against Peru's Luis Horna and he is slated to meet Carlos Moya of Spain, the 1998 champion, in the last eight.



MVP: New Zealand spinner Daniel Vettori shows his appreciation to the car he received after being named the most valuable player of the Bank Alfalah Cup tri-nation tournament in Sri Lanka on May 23. His team won the tournament defeating Pakistan by four wickets in the final.