16 move into second round

Sports Reporter

The first leg of the four- leg Bangladesh-Pakistan ITF satellite tennis circuit tournament got underway at the Ramna Tennis complex yesterday with eleven qualifying matches being decided.

The main draw of the Dhaka leg tournament, known as the Gold Leaf ITF Satellite Circuit, begins Monday after another day of qualifying fixtures today that will decide eight places for the 32 main draw/ slots. Twenty professional players have already been seeded for the main draw while the remaining four berths will be filled up by wild card entries, two from each of the host countries Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Sixteen players moved into the second round of the two-day qualifying meet with five of them- four from Bangladesh and one form Italy- having received first- round byes. The Bangladesh who received byes yesterday were Ahsan Roni Azeem, Layes Quasem, Masudur Rahman and Mohammad Babu while the Italian player was Fabrizio Bertani.

Of the eleven matches decided in the two sessions Saturday, the one that stood out for excellence was undoubtedly the clash between Mario Pastore of Italy and Anando Vanderdoren of Belgium in the afternoon.

Pastore attacked from the word go and before Vanderdoren, an Indian based in Belgium could wake up, he was facing a 1-5 deficit in the first set.

Blistering down the line double- fisted backhands and looping forehands landing inches inside the baseline allowed the Belgian to claw back to 3-5. But Pastore served out the set- 6-3.

The second set was a repitition of the first with the Italian rushing net and the Belgian counter- punching. Pastore got to a 5-2 lead when the Belgian summoned his remaining resources to come back to 4-5.

Limping perceptibly, the Italian who looked to be on the verge of cramping in on-court temperatures of around 100 degrees Fahrenheit, called forth his last iota of energy and held serve to finally win the pulsating encounter 6-3, 6-4 for a passage into today's second round.

The quality of the ten other matches on the opening day were too poor to warrant mention. Five of them produced 0-6, 0-6 whitewashes, three produced 6-0, 6-1 results, one ended 6-1, 6-1 while the other finished 6-0, 7-6.

Following are the results:

Mirza (Ban) bt. Manju (Ban) 6-0, 6-1;

Heinhuis (Hol) bt. Shuja (Ban) 6-0, 6-0;

Khalid (Pak) bt. Shaheem (Ban) 6-0, 6-0;

Roni (Ban) bt. Khurshid (Ban) 6-0, 7-6;

Pastore (Ita) bt. Vanderdoren (Bel) 6-3,6-4;

Hulshof(Hol) bt. Chisty (Ban) 6-0, 6-0;

Zia (Pak) bt. Maitra (Ban) 6-0, 6-0;

Nestel (US) bt. Ejaz (Ban) 6 0, 6-0;

Lodh (Ban) bt. Tawfiqul (Ban) 6-1, 6-1;

Pablo (US) bt. Sarwar (Ban) 6-0, 6-1;

Dorsey (Macao) bt. Rabbi (Ban) 6-0, 6-1;

The most important event todate in the country's humble tennis history, the satellite circuit is worth 25,000 US dollars in prize- money, provided by the Grand Slam Development Fund of the International Tennis Federation (ITF). The four-leg satellite meet will be played in Dhaka (Nov 2-8), Rajshahi (Nov 10-16), Lahore in Pakistan Nov 18-23 and Karachi Nov 24-30.

Competitions will beheld in the men's singles and doubles events with the winners collecting ranking points on the ATP computer in accordance with their performances.

This is for the first time that professional players from around the world — twenty from nine countries at the last count — are taking part in the maiden professional tournament of the country.

The Dhaka leg of the circuit is being sponsored by Bangladesh Tobacco Company who will be bearing all local expenses except prize-money.

The singles champion of each leg is guaranteed US dollars 813 while the runner- up half that amount. The doubles champions will share 393.75 dollars while the runners - up half that sum.

Peter Malik, a well-known international referee from Indian and chair umpire Laurens De Wals of the Netherlands are in the city to conduct the circuit on behalf of the ITF.

Today's qualifying matches begin at ten in the morning.

Rookie pros reach semis

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona, Nov 2: Fifteen-year-old American Chanda Rubin and Czechoslovak Karina Habsudova reached the semifinals for the first time as professionals on Friday with wins in the 150,000 dollar Arizona Tennis Classic, reports Reuter.

Rubin, playing in only her second tournament since turning professional at the US Open in September, beat unseeded compatriot Ginger Helgeson 6-3, 7-5, while the hard-hitting Habsudova, 18, defeated American Kimberly Po 4-6, 6-1, 6-3.

Rubin and Habsudova will meet in one of today's semifinals, with third-seeded Sabine Appelmans of Belgium going against second seed Julie Halard of France in the other.

Halard beat American Patty Fendick 4-6, 6-4, 6-1, to advance. Appelmans was also pressed before turning back Nicole Provis of Australia 7-6 (7-5), 6-4.

Rubin said she did not expect such sudden success.

"I just wanted to qualify" said Rubin, who swept through three opponents to gain the main draw.

"It's exciting and I didn't expect it. Now it's all loose and fun. I don't have any pressure on me."

Rubin had an unexpected advantage since Helgeson had sprained her left ankle in eliminating top seed Gigi Fernandez in the second round on Thursday.

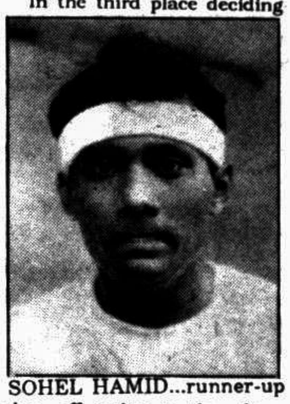
Unstoppable Bhola

Sports Reporter

Bhola Lal, the unassuming marker of Sonargaon Hotel, proved once again that as far as local squash talent goes, he is still a class above the rest.

Playing at the Dhaka Club court yesterday afternoon, Bhola began slowly against his taller opponent Sohel Hamid but very soon was into his strides and with an air of clinical assurance pocketed the winner's purse of four thousand taka by winning the inaugural Federation Cup squash title. The score of a rather one- sided final read 9-6, 9-1, 9-3 in favour of the reigning national champion.

BHOLA LAL ...unbeatable



SOHEL HAMID...runner-up

Bhola, who has won every single title or trophy at stake since announcing his arrival on the country's squash scene back in 1986, quite surprisingly dropped as many as six points to Sohel in the opening game of the best- of -five final. By the sheer dint of his determination and the will to fight Sohel succeeded in making the more confident Bhola run across the court perhaps a bit more than he would have preferred. Yet once the initial inhibitions had been overcome, Bhola brooked no further nonsense and dismissed Sohel in the next two games in less than a quarter of an hour. So superior were Bhola's skills that they became all too evident for the forty to fifty odd spectators and guests who had cramped into the small balcony that serves as the stands inside the tin-roofed court.

Sohel Hamid, the younger brother of Dhaka Mohammedans' and national soccer star Kaiser, was left richer by Taka 3000 for his toils.

For Bhola, a high point in his career was the honour of representing his country at the Asian squash championships held in Calcutta last year.

In the third place deciding play- off earlier in the afternoon, Ram Jagadish produced a remarkable late rally to beat former Bangladesh champion Shahjahan Sikder after having lost the first two games.

Shahjahan, who despite the loss proved that his oncourt skills were of a far superior order compared to those of his eventual conqueror, took the first two games 9-6, 9-4. But that's as far as his diminishing reserves of strength and stamina would let him proceed.

Ram Jagadish, who lost the semifinal to Bhola on Friday, pulled back by winning the third game 9-5. He drew level in the fourth winning 9-4, and took the fifth and final game 9-1, a scoreline that suggested that Shahjahan's breath had all but gone.

Ram Jagadish collected the third prize of Taka 2000 and Shahjahan half that sum for his fourth place finish in a field of seventy players.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain gave away the prizes among the winners after the final which was also attended by Abdul Muyeed Chowdhury, president of the Bangladesh Squash Rackets Federation, organisers of the eight- day meet.

Meyer betters Kristiansen's 15km world best time

CAPE TOWN, Nov 2: South African Elana Meyer finished 20 seconds inside Norwegian Ingrid Kristiansen's four-year-old world best time for the 15 kms at the national road running championships on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Meyer, considered South Africa's best medal hope if the country accepts an invitation to next year's Barcelona Olympics, clocked 46 minutes 57 seconds.

The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) does not officially recognise times set by South Africans because of the country's sporting isolation.

But the anti-apartheid sports boycott is crumbling. The National Olympic Committee of South Africa meets on Sunday and is expected to accept an invitation to the Barcelona Games.

It was the second time that Meyer has bettered one of Kristiansen's times.

Raktim, PWD march on

Sports Reporter

Bangladesh PWD Club and Raktim Sangha registered comfortable victories in their respective matches of the Green Delta Insurance Second Division hockey league encounters yesterday at the Hockey Stadium.

PWD outplayed Mukta Bihanga Tarun Sangha 3-0 while Raktim Sangha coasted to a 2-0 win over East End Green.

Musa scored PWD's first goal in the eleventh minutes of the first half. Seven minutes later Shamim found the mark with a beautiful field goal.

Musa sealed the fate of the match with a powerful angular shot in the 26th minute of the first half.

Raktim Sangha's Tutul banged their first goal in the length minutes of the proceedings.

Kamal scored Sangha's second goal in the 25th minutes of the play.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Agrani Bank vs Young Star (2:00 pm)

Shishu Kishore vs Udity Club (3:15 pm)

Navy volleyball

KAPTAI, Nov 2: The inter-base volleyball championship of Bangladesh Navy will begin at the BNS Shahid Moazzam at Kaptai tomorrow, reports BSS.

Competitors drawn from eight different NAVAL ships and establishments will take part in the four- day meet.

Tennis results

BUZIOS, Brazil, Nov 2 : Spains' Francisco Roig came from behind and upset fourth-seeded Thomas Muster of Austria to advance to the semi-finals of the dlrs 175,000 Kolynos Cup Tennis Tournament, reports AP.

Buzios is a resort near Rio de Janeiro.

Anand upsets Kasparov

TILBURG, Nethrlands, Nov 2: Indian Grandmaster Viswanathan Anand inflicted a sensational defeat on Friday on world champion Garry Kasparov, his first loss in this year's Interpolis Tilburg tournament, reports Reuter.

With two rounds left to play in the 14-round tournament, Kasparov's lead over the second-placed Anand, a former junior world champion, has been cut to just one point.

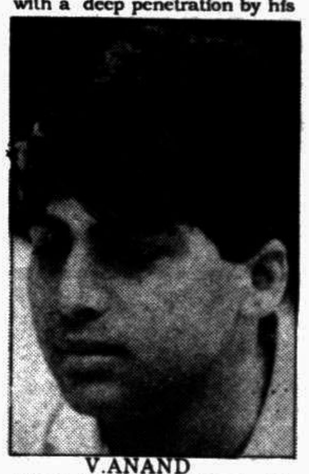
If Anand wins his adjourned 11th round game against Gata Kamsky he will be level with Kasparov, who set his heart on winning this competition against strong opposition after failing to win either of the two other tournaments he has entered this year.

Kasparov, playing black, plunged in to the Najdorf variation of Kasparov's Sicilian defence, one of the sharpest lines in this opening.

Anand, playing in his usual fast style, castled short on move eight, much earlier than usual.

"This move looked very dangerous (for Anand)," Dutch International Master Cornelius Van Wijgerden said.

Kasparov snapped up a "poisoned pawn," on the b-file with a deep penetration by his queen, but leaving Anand with a favourable central posting for his knight.



V.ANAND

Anand was then able to trap Kasparov's queen, which went down fighting near the edge of the board taking three of Anand's pieces with it.

"It was very, very exciting," Van Wijgerden said.

The resultant position was materially fairly balanced, but positionally Kasparov stood worse, with his king exposed and uncastled in the centre of the board, while Anand's marauding pieces closed in.

In the end Kasparov was unable to develop his queen's bishop, and resigned on move 29 as his position crumbled.

In the remaining two rounds Kasparov has the two harder opponents, with black today against Britain's Nigel Short who drew against Viktor Korchnoi on Friday, and on Monday white against old rival ex-world champion Anatoly Karpov.

Karpov lost on Friday against the 17-year-old Kamsky in a 72- move kings Indian defence.

Anand has to play Karpov with black today and is white against tournament tail-ender Yevgeny Bareyev on Monday.

"Maybe Anand can tie it up with Kasparov," Van Wijgerden said, noting that he has the better position in his adjourned game against Kamsky.

ITF Satellite circuit comes to town : A preview

By Sardar Iftekhar

A new chapter is being written in the history of the tennis movement in Bangladesh with the commencement of the first leg of the ITF Satellite Tennis Circuit jointly being staged in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

This has been possible largely due to the enthusiasm of the International Tennis Federation to expand upon its global development plans and operations and the initiative of some diehard tennis lovers-cum- organisers in Pakistan, eager to put that country on the map of professional tennis.

Bangladesh's contribution in its materialisation has largely been through the attendance of a conference of the ITF last year when this idea of holding a circuit spanning two countries and four cities was first conceived. The rest of the sequence of events apparently have come about as a result of Newton's First Law of Motion.

THE FORMAT

Coming to the circuit itself, it comprises three legs or tournaments. They will be held in back-to-back weeks from Nov. 2. 1991 in Dhaka, Rajshahi, and Lahore. The qualifying rounds of each tournament will be held on the first two days. This is a 32-man event and the last eight go on to play in the tournament proper.

The main draw will also feature 32 players. Eight of these will come from the qualifying rounds; four players, two each from Bangladesh and Pakistan to be nominated by their respective tennis federations will be given wild cards to enable them to play directly, bypassing the qualifying rounds. The remaining 20 slots will be filled up by players having ATP points ranking. In the first leg, the top seed is Laurence Ticleman of Italy, ranked 429 in the world and the last person to get into the main draw on the basis of his ranking is Young Men-Kwon of the United States, who is jointly ranked 1116 with four other gentlemen.

If any of the players being given direct entry into the main round fails to turn up, his place shall be taken by drawing lots from those in the qualifying rounds, provided they do not have any computer ranking points (in which case they shall be given the slots based on ranking). For the record, five players who had been given direct entry for the Dhaka leg did not turn up. So their places have been taken by five qualifiers who have been picked out of the hat.

The format is quite simple. Players entering the main event will be awarded circuit points based on their performance. Incidentally, even a first round loser in the main draw is ensured one circuit point. At the end of the third leg in Lahore, the top 24 circuit point holders go on to play the Masters' tournament in Karachi in the last week of November. It is based on the performances in the Masters that the circuit points earned by a player will be converted into ATP points in a pre-determined ratio, thus enabling a player to obtain or enhance his ranking as a professional.

The ITF supervisor is Peter Malik of India for the two legs in Bangladesh and Sultan Gangi of Pakistan for the two remaining events in Pakistan. The chair umpire for the entire circuit is Laurens De Wals of the Netherlands. Both of these gentlemen are veterans in terms of their association with the ITF.

SARDAR IFTEKHAR

The winner of each leg will get US dollars 813.00 and all losers in the first round will be quaranteed USD-74.00 (minus local taxes if any and the entry fee of USD 20.00).

Incidentally, the men's doubles event will be a main draw event only comprising sixteen teams. Fifteen shall have to qualify on merit, that is, computer points and the remaining team will be given a wild card. Since teams from both Bangladesh and Pakistan will be in contention for this elusive spot, it remains to be seen how our great Bangladesh Tennis Federation works around this. Perhaps a Bangladeshi team in favour with the BTF will be given the wild card for the two Bangladeshi legs while the Pakistan Tennis Federation will nominate their best team for the Lahore leg.

LOCAL ORGANISATION

The Bangladesh Tennis Federation have scaled new heights and set new standards in inefficiency at conducting an event of this level. Their PR has been non-existent. An interesting feature is that the top three players of the country, the nucleus of the Davis Cup team that has served the country creditably in spite of their limitations and helped keep some of the jobs of some cholesterol laden BTF officials are mysteriously missing. There has been no effort expended to help put up a credible local challenge. The exercise has simply revolved around scratching each other's back. For instance, a player who has never made the grade either as a junior or senior has been given a wild card simply to appease him since the BTF officials are of the mistaken impression that he represents the local tennis players' body! They have totally shunned the incumbent achievers deliberately but for reasons best known to them. There was really enough room for all of us to compete. If the intention is to create an opportunity for the next generation the BTF would do well to do their homework. They should know that youngsters have to be blooded very carefully and under proper tutelage, not under coaches whose interests are purely to effect personal gain. But how can we expect better management from the BTF? It is essentially the same team minus a few kingpins of the former regime. There has only been a re-shuffling of portfolios with a few new faces. It is really sad but this is just a reflection of the reversal of the domino effect. Whereas, literally, every country and organisation is going from good to better, we seem to be revelling in the act of going from bad to worse!

A CASE IN POINT

Already there is grumbling behind the scenes. This correspondent was told by some sources wishing to remain anonymous that there is a wider discrepancy between the fees of a linesman and an unpire than was agreed upon or is decent. The lunch expenses being provided to the young boys helping to organise the tournament have also been cut by approximately 30%, maybe to compensate for miscellaneous expenses to be spent somewhere else! Hats have also not been provided to the linesmen and umpires going out to officiate in the sun as was promised, but these are only the tip of the proverbial iceberg with regard to the problems being bred and perpetuated by inept, callously negligent and aloof officials at their worst.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the day, we hope and wish that the tournament would be a success inspite of these bunglings. The successful staging of this circuit would mark an important milestone for us in particular.Our fervent request to the BTF is, please wake up, be fair and do what you all would be sanely expected to do. Please do not carry on where your illustrious predecessors left off and hammer in the remaining nails in the coffin of Bangladesh tennis and despatch it to oblivion.

— The author is a former five times national singles champion. He is also the current national number two.

Watson stable

LONDON, Nov 2 : British boxer Michael Watson has survived the most critical stages of his injuries and is continuing to make slow progress, reports AFP.

The 26-year-old Londoner suffered severe brain injures in losing his World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight title fight to Chris Eubank here on September 21.

A spokeswoman at St Bartholomew's hospital said on Friday that Watson now "moves both sides of his body and has some control of the movements on the right side."

Although not completely out of danger, his surgeon Peter Hamlyn was pleased with his progress and the boxer is continuing to breathe without a life-support machine.

"Michael has had another stable week in which he has made further slow progress", the spokeswoman said. "He is able to understand and respond to simple commands."

"Michael is unable to speak if for no other reason than that the tracheotomy tube he needs to help his breathing prevents speech to some degree."

Dutch player Evert Jan Hulshof in action during his first round qualifying match of ITF Satellite circuit against Bangladesh's Mayeem Chisty at Tennis Complex yesterday.

Intriguing scenario in Paris Open

PARIS, Nov 2 : Pete Sampras must overcome Jinx opponent Michael Chang if he is to reach Sunday's final at the Paris Open — and Guy Forget will need to blot out the antics of one of the noisiest crowds in tennis when he faces dangerous Swedish outsider Joans Svensson for the right to play him, reports AFP.

Sampras put a small back on the faces of the organisers of the two-million-dollar event on Friday by scoring a sylish straight sets 6-2, 6-3 win over Russian opponent Alexander Volkov.

After the world's top three players failed to reach the quarter-finals on Thursday, the dismissal of another top seed could have spelt near-disaster for the tournament.

But there was no smile on the 20-year-old's face when he learned that he would be facing Michael Chang in the next round.

For Chang, who put out ninth-seed Petr Korda of Czechoslovakia 7-5, 6-1, is an awkward opponent with a tactical brain that seems to confound the classical serve-and-volley tennis of the elegant 6ft player from Washington.

In fact Chang has not only won all five previous matches against the 1990 United States Open champion he has dropped only one set in the process.

Sampras, however, desperately asserting his claim for a place in the United States team for the Davis Cup final against France in Lyon later this month, thinks that this time he can turn the tables.

"I feel I am playing really well at the moment. I feel fit and healthy and I'm really looking forward to tomorrow, he said.

Certainly he hardly put a foot wrong and never appeared to be in any real danger during his one-seeded 62-minute clash against Volkova a dangerous opponent who came to within a point of putting Michael Stich out of Wimbledon.

Sampras' big-serving, and the remarkable power he generated off his ground-strokes, had the 24th-ranked Russian on the defensive from the start.

In a remarkable 30-minute first set Volkov pocketed only three points off the American's serve — and one of those points came from a double-fault.

By contrast the American broke Volkov with stussing ease in both the fourth and eighth games.

And if the 24-year-old Russian was hoping the storm would pass and that he would be able to stage a revival in the second set he was to be quickly disillusioned. Sampras continued where he had left off.

As Volkov became increasingly frustrated by his opponents deadly accuracy and pace, he copped a warning for kicking his racket across the court. And when he dropped serve again in the eighth game it was as good as handing Sampras the match.

Sampras, who has now beaten Volkov three times in their four meetings, reduced his opponent to the role of spectator ten times as he slammed down aces.

There is little doubt that his classy performance will have impressed Tom Gorman who may now decide to let Sampras make his Davis Cup debut as the second singles player alongside Andre Agassi in Lyon.

Sixteenth-seed Michael Chang, who has made no secret that Paris is one of his favourite venues, also dominated his quarter final against Czecholovakia's Petre Korda.

The 19-year-old Chinese-American, who became the youngest-ever French Open winner at Roland Garros two years ago and who shocked the Paris Open on Thursday by putting out world number-one Stefan Edberg, twice dropped serve to trail 3-4 and then 4-5 to the Czech ninth seed in the first set.

But on both occasions he found the resources to immediately break back.

And once he had taken the set, he never looked back-pulling the 23-year-old 6ft in Korda all over the court and forcing him into errors with the quality of his ground-strokes.

After his victory, Chang, like Sampras, said he was delighted with the way he was playing.

"I feel very confident and I have nothing to lose," he smiled, adding "I have beaten him in all of our official tournament matches."

In the other half of the draw, fifth-seeded French left-hander Guy Forget got off to a flying start, stuttered inexplicably to a standstill, and then set off again to beat Omar Camporese of Italy 6-1, 3-6, 6-3.

The unseeded 23-year-old Italian, who put third-seeded Jim Courier out of the tournament on Thursday, never got his serve working in a disappointing first set.

But he came back strongly in the second and for a time it looked as though the 26-year-old Frenchman's notoriously fragile temperament would let him down.

Forget, who can become easily distracted, appeared to lose concentration, but he kept fighting and, to the relief of the packed Bercy Stadium crowd he surged back to win.