

Becker takes title, and with it the No. 1 mantle

MELBOURNE, Jan 27: Boris Becker grabbed his first Australian Open title and leaped to No. 1 for the first time in his career as he overcame back spasms to beat Ivan Lendl with a diving, rolling net attack, reports AP.

Becker shied away from the net in the opening set while troubled by his back, but after a quick massage and some stretches midway through the second set he roared back to beat the two-time defending champion 1-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 Sunday.

Becker leaped in the air, heaved his racket high into the packed crowd of 15,000, then fled briefly from the court after his final forehand winner broke Lendl at 15-40 on a second match point.

The German returned moments later for the trophy presentation and was too emotional to express himself to the crowd.

"It's unbelievable for me at this moment," he said. Becker, 23, won three Wimbledon and one U.S. Open, but this victory finally put him atop the men's ranking, displacing Stefan Edberg, who took the No. 1 spot from Lendl last summer.

Becker matched Lendl's nine aces, but won this match with his more dynamic play at the net, diving and rolling on the hard court as if frolicking on grass.

Lendl played superbly in the opening set, hammering winners from corner to corner while Becker struggled. Lendl finished off the set with his fourth ace, while Becker belatedly to himself in German about his poor play and kept flexing his back to loosen up.

Becker won just one of his five approaches to net in the first set, and was still struggling early in the second set. After Lendl unleashed three more aces to hold to 2-2 in the second set, Becker stayed with him to hold to 3-2, then took off his shirt to get a court-side massage by a trainer.

Without taking an injury timeout, Becker recovered quickly and started playing more aggressively at the net.

Becker ventured to the net 14 times in the second set, winning five points in that fashion, and took the set by breaking Lendl with a lunging, stretching forehand volley on Lendl's forehand passing attempt.

Becker won all four of his previous Grand Slam matches against Lendl, beating him at Wimbledon in 1986, 1988 and 1989, and in a four-set final at the U.S. Open in 1989. They split their 12 final matches before this tournament.

Lendl thought the key to the match was the first game of the second set, in which he squandered a break point after Becker's first double fault to 30-40. Lendl then hit a backhand down the line that was only inches wide.

"It was a great shot. He would not have gotten to it," Lendl said. "If I would have broken ... it would have been a rout."



Boris Becker became the world's top ranked men's player after winning the Australian Open defeating title holder Ivan Lendl, 1-6, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4, in Melbourne yesterday.

Becker opened the third set with two service winners and held on another after saving three break points and getting the advantage with a brilliant backhand volley reminiscent of his diving, spinning net play at Wimbledon. It was the second time in the game Becker hit that kind of acrobatic shot, and the crowd roared with delight.

Lendl spent much of the next game screaming at a linesman and the umpire over questionable calls, and was broken after serving a double fault when he had game point.

Emboldened by his success at the net, Becker charged in 16 times in the third set, winning 10 of those forays, then closed out the set with a running forehand pass down the line and into the corner that broke Lendl's service and spirit.

"It was hitting 100 mph on some of his shots," Lendl said.

Becker served even harder than that as he uncorked four service winners and two aces and allowed only three points in his two service games of the fourth set.

In the fifth game, Becker saved two break points from 15-40 on a service winner, a backhand passing shot down the line that kissed the corner, a backhand crosscourt pass and his eighth ace.

The crowd erupted in a roar on the ace, as Becker closed in on victory with a 3-2 lead.

But Lendl, who escaped two match points against Edberg in the semifinals, did not fold easily. He held at love to 3-3, and the set stayed on serve until Lendl served the 10th game.

Becker took a love-40 lead on two errors by Lendl and a putaway volley set up by a big forehand approach shot.

Lendl saved one match point on a backhand cross-court pass, but Becker closed out the match on Lendl's second serve on the next point when he drilled a forehand return down the line.

AFF adds: It was Becker's sixth Australian Open but the first in which he had progressed beyond the quarter-finals.

During the tournament, he set a record for the longest singles match played here, beating unseeded Italian Omar Camporese in the third round in a five-setter lasting five hours, 11 minutes.

Lendl, bidding for his third successive Australian title, beat the world's top-ranked player, Stefan Edberg in a five-set semi-final.

Following Edberg's defeat, Becker's victory gave him more points than the Swede on the ATP Association of Tennis Professionals computer.

Awarding the Australian champions' trophy to Becker, the president of Tennis Australia, Geoff Pollard, said that he had become "the world's number one."

Becker, who seemed to be crashing towards defeat when he lost the first set in 28 minutes, said he was unable to make a speech accepting the trophy.

He said only "Thank you all" before descending from the podium.

In the first set, Becker was in obvious physical discomfort, and at one point briefly left the court.

His trainer Todd Snyder said on Australian television after giving him on-court treatment that Becker was suffering from "spasms which affected his lower back and prevented him moving freely to his right."

After the treatment, Becker's play improved markedly.

Becker is the first German to win the Australian title, his fifth in a Grand Slam tournament.

In 1985, aged 17 and unseeded, he became the youngest man to win a singles title at Wimbledon.

He took the Wimbledon title again in 1986 and a third time in 1989, when he also won the U.S. Open.

Wari outplay Nirman Schools

Sports Reporter

Wari Club recorded their sixth win in nine matches in the Milnars First Division cricket league when they handed out a massive 117-run thrashing to Nirman Schools XI at the Mirpur Pallabi ground.

In reply to Wari's 174 for nine in 45 overs, Nirman could only muster 57 before closing shop in 22.4 overs.

Itekar with 36, Jongi 34 and Yousuf 25 were the prominent Wari scorers while Mukul got three wickets for 34 and Afzal two for 35.

When Nirman Schools batted, Kajal, Kamrul and Rafiqul wreaked havoc with the ball, sharing eight wickets between them for a total 38 runs. Kajal bagged four for 21, Kamrul two for 14 and Rafiqul two for just three runs. Only Mukul offered any resistance, making 24 of his side's 57 paltry runs.

TODAY'S MATCH

Agrani Bank vs Bangladesh Railway (Mirpur)

Ashkar Dighi win in Star cricket

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: Ashkar Dighi Ekadosh beat Bakalia Popular Club by 100 runs in the CJKP Star youth cricket tournament at the Outer Stadium here today, reports BSS.

Ashkar Dighi batted first and were all out for 193 in 34.2 overs. Rashed topscored with 23 followed by Hasan 22 and Kayes 20. Ashkar Dighi's total of 193 included 54 extras.

Sohel of Bakalia captured five wickets for 20 runs.

In reply, Bakalia were all out for 93 runs in 24.5 overs. Shabbir of Ashkar Dighi played a dominant role in guiding his team to victory for only seven runs, followed by Kayes two for 21 and Jewel two for 12 runs.

Handball league

Sports Reporter

West Jatrabari, kept their championship hopes alive with an impressive 22-16 win over Christian Youth Club in the second Division handball super league match yesterday at the Outer Stadium handball. Jatrabari led 9-5 at the breather.

Dipu and Monir with eight goals each were the scorers for Jatrabari while Mamun win five goals kept up the challenge for Christian Youth.

Jatrabari have now collected 16 points from six matches, which includes five wins, while Christian Youth finished their super league engagements with seven points from seven matches. Jagaron Sangskriti Sangha scored their third win when they outclassed Farashganj Sporting Club 15-6 in the second match of the day.

Jagaron now have 12 points from six matches while Farashganj crashed to their seventh defeat in seven matches.

TODAY'S MATCHES

Arunayaton vs Jr. Moishundi: (2:30 pm)
W. Jatrabari vs Jagaron (3:30 pm)

PDB sports on

Sports Reporter

The annual athletics competition of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) began at the Rajarbagh Police Lines ground yesterday.

Presidential Advisor for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Prof. Wahiduddin Ahmed inaugurated the two-day meet in the morning.

In all, 191 officers and employees of 15 teams from different PDB offices are taking part.

PDB Chairman Shamsul Islam, President of PDB Sports and Cultural Committee and Member (Distribution) Syed Q. Alam and senior officers of the board were present.

A long flight for Biman

Sports Reporter

A punishing unbeaten 84 by Akram Khan powered star-studded Brothers Union to a massive 290* for eight wickets — the highest total this season — in their Navana Premier Division cricket league match against Bangladesh Biman at the Dhaka Stadium.

At draw of stumps on the first day, Biman had negotiated seven of their stipulated 75 overs to reach 18 without loss.

Biman skipper Shahnawaz Shanu must have regretted his decision to insert the Gopibagh boys after winning the toss for Farooq and Shovon set Brothers off to a sound start by gathering 59 runs for the first wicket, a start from which Brothers never looked back. Farooq left for 24 but Shovon, who was batting steadily, had to come off injured and when he went in again he was the eighth man out after posting 40 runs against his name.

Shovon's retirement helped Brothers see 148 on the board for the loss of one wicket at one stage. But after Masoom's dismissal for 39 on that score, the subsequent batsmen managed modest stands that helped add between 20 and 30 runs for most partnerships, enough to take the total to a formidable ten runs short of 300.

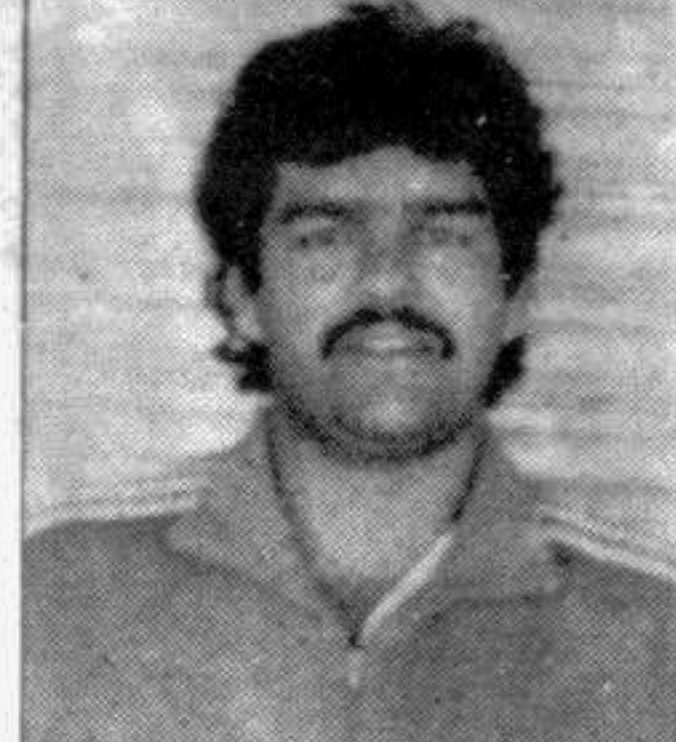
Akram Khan took just 90 balls for his brilliant knock, hitting three sixes and two fours. Once he settled down he really launched into the Biman attack, whose spinners didn't

quite know where to pitch to the burly batsman.

Skipper Atahar Ali Khan had made 34 before he allowed Aminul Islam Bulbul to cast him. Left-arm West Bengal all-rounder Arup Bhattacharya, who played sterling sixty-plus knocks in the previous two games, for once failed to get going, managing only 17 this time around. Suru, Fernando and Prince, better known for their medium-paced skills with the ball, fell cheaply in quick succession trying to obey the captain's instructions to use the long handle as the overs started running out. A fat bonus of 35 runs by way of sundries bolstered Brothers further.

In spite of the bashing meted out by the Brothers batsmen, or perhaps because of it Sumon managed to pick up four wickets at a cost of 54 runs off 13 overs, most to his victims being at the lower end of the line up who got carried away by temptation.

Left-arm spinner Enamul



AKRAM KHAN

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Haq Moni and Aminul Islam Bulbul also came in for a bit of stick, taking two and one wicket for 58 and 57 runs respectively.

But Biman should not be too daunted by the target for they do possess considerable depth in batting. This season's first centurion Jahangir Alam, and the country's only triple-centurion Tariquzzaman Munir, were batting on nine each. Should the pair make a good resumption this morning, and should the other Biman batsmen like Bulbul, Bachchu Shanu, and Moni pick up the lead then the crowd can expect a good run chase.

MSC-Tarun tie not held

The day's other fixture, involving Mohammedan Sporting Club and Surjo Tarun, scheduled for the Dhanmanti Cricket Stadium, did not get started as Mohammedans failed to turn up at the venue.

Mohammedans claimed that they were not given adequate reasons by the league committee for shifting the match to the DCS from its original Dhaka Stadium venue. Besides, Mohammedans cited lack of proper security at the DCS.

On the other hand, Surjo Tarun, in a press release, claimed they should be awarded the full points from the tie for Mohammedans refusal to play despite excellent playing conditions. They called upon the league committee to deem Mohammedans refusal as a walkover under the meaning of the existing BCCB by-laws.

McDermott, Reid have England on the rack



ADELAIDE, Jan 27: Despite a late come back by their bowlers, England's hopes of squaring the Ashes series crumbled along with their batting on the third day of the fourth cricket Test today, reports Reuter.

Australia, 2-0 ahead in the five-match series, lead the touring team by 225 runs with six wickets remaining in their second innings.

England's batting was ravaged by the familiar lean figure of Bruce Reid, with four for 53, and the recalled Craig McDermott, who took five for 97 on his return to the Test arena.

McDermott, who played 24 Tests up to 1988, must now be a strong contender for a place in the squad when Australia visit West Indies starting next month.

England, resuming at 95 for two, had reached 160 for three in pursuit of Australia's first innings 386 before they lost their last seven wickets for 69 runs.

They were thus dismissed for 229, 157 runs short of Australia, who were 68 for four in their second innings at the close.

Graham Gooch, Robin Smith and Philip DeFreitas all made their best scores of the series but no other player managed more than 11.

Gooch and Smith, resuming at 95 for two overnight, took the score to 111 and their third wicket stand to a hundred in the seventh over of the morning. The century stand took 142 minutes and 214 balls.

While Gooch moved past his previous tour best of 59, Smith, having been becalmed on 44 for 29 minutes and 49 for 17 minutes, finally hit Hughes square to bring up a 148-ball half-century.

On ball number 149 he gave

a return catch. England still looked well placed but, with the last delivery before lunch, David Gower lifted McDermott off his legs and into Meru Hughes' hands at backward square leg.

It was a foolish but characteristic stroke and, as coach Mickey Stewart said: "It is the way he plays. If you praise him when he comes of it is totally unfair to criticise when it

doesn't."

Gooch, at the non-striker's end, still looked bitterly disappointed.

He lasted just 23 minutes after the break and had reached 87 when he became the first of Reid's victims, all of them caught by wicketkeeper Ian Healy.

Of Reid's total of 25 wickets during the series, 12 have been caught by Healy.

Only DeFreitas, who stuck a rapid 45 in 56 balls, provided any resistance as McDermott and Reid mopped up the tail.

"It was very disappointing to be bowled out for 229," said Stewart but he added: "We were pleased to get four out - it was a good performance."

All four Australians fell to a repeat of their first innings dismissals, with an element of difference.

This time Gooch juggled the second slip catch off Gladstone Small that dismissals, Small that dismissed Geoff Marsh for nought in the second over while Mark Taylor was left stranded by a call from David Boon to be run out. In the first innings the culprit was Marsh.

It was the second time in three Adelaide Tests Taylor

had been run out in both innings, and the man who took 839 runs at 8.90 off England in 1989 has managed just 182 at 26.00 in this series.

DeFreitas again had Dean Jones leg before and Mark Waugh, the first innings century-making hero, staged a bizarre repeat dismissal as he again chopped Devon Malcolm onto his stumps, this time for 23.

But Boon, 24 not out, and Hughes - a surprise choice as nightwatchman - negotiated the remaining 13 minutes and helped ensure Australia will probably not lose this Test.

SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day of the fourth cricket Test between England and Australia today.

Australia - first innings - 386 (M. Waugh 138, G. Matthews 65)

England - first innings (overnight 95 for two)

Gooch c Healy b Reid	87
Atherton lbw McDermott	0
Lab c Healy b McDermott	0
Smith c and b Hughes	53
Gower c Hughes b McDermott	45
Stewart c Healy b Reid	11
DeFreitas c Matthews b McDermott	45
Small b McDermott	1
Fraser c Healy b Reid	2
Malcolm c Healy b Reid	2
Tufnell not out	17
Extras (B-1 lb-3 nb-13)	0
Total	229

Fall of wickets: 1-10, 2-11, 3-137; 4-160; 4-160; 6-179; 7-198; 8-215, 9-219.

Bowling - O M R W

Reid	29	9	53	4
McDermott	26	3	97	5
Hughes	22	4	62	1
Waugh	4	1	13	0

Australia - second innings

Taylor run out	4
Marsh c Gooch b Small	0
D. Boon not out	24
Jones lbw DeFreitas	8
Waugh b Malcolm	23
M. Hughes not out	3
Extras (lb-4 w-1)	6
Total (for four wickets)	68

Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-8; 3-25; 4-64.

Bowling O M R W

Malco	18	0	16	1
Small	11	3	30	1
DeFreitas	10	3	18	1

Johnson sets Canadian mark with flash of old form

OTTAWA, Jan 27: Canadian sprinter Ben Johnson tasted victory for the first time since his 1988 steroid suspension by winning the 55 metres at the Ottawa winter national indoor games on Saturday, reports Reuter.

Johnson won a close race with a time of 6.20 seconds after bursting out of the blocks with a flash of his old form.

"It was a really good race", Johnson told a mob of reporters at the finish line after his third race of a comeback since the two-year suspension handed down after he failed his doping test at the Seoul Olympics.

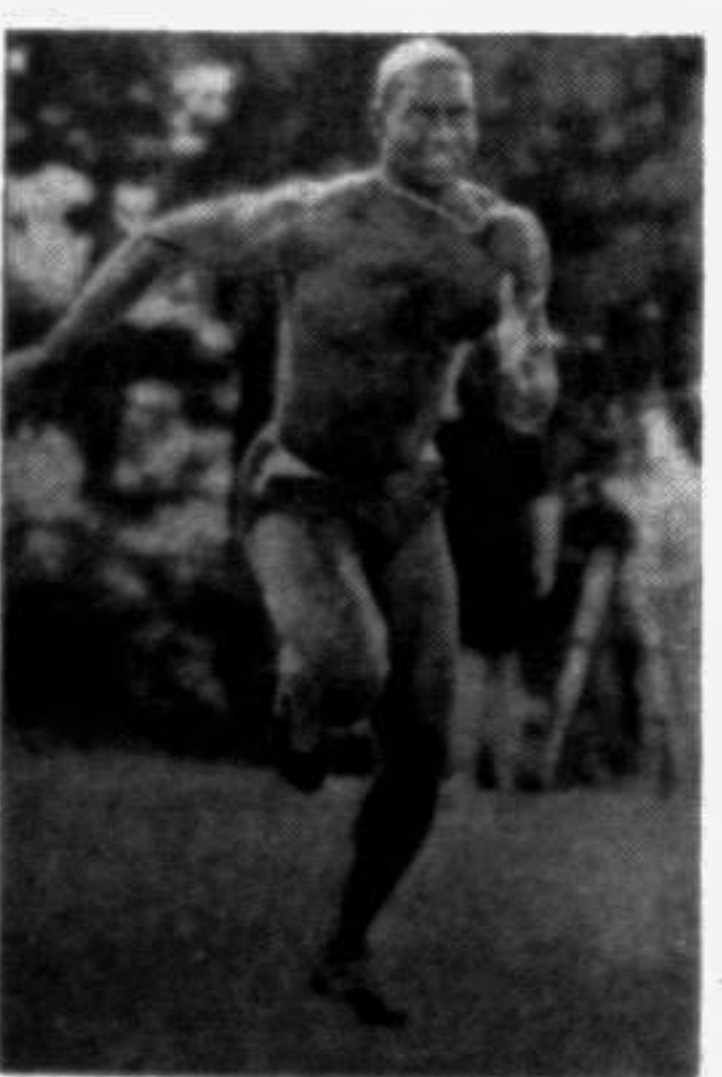
Canadian Brian Morrison was second in 6.21 following by American Daron Council, who beat Johnson in his first race back two weeks ago, in 6.24.

Johnson established a new Canadian record by breaking the old mark of 6.21 seconds set by Mark McCoy. Johnson had previously run the distance in 6.01 seconds but the record was erased after he admitted to taking steroids.

Over finished the world's fastest man, Johnson fell spectacularly from grace in Seoul when he tested positive for steroids following his record run of 9.79 seconds in the Olympic 100 metres.

Council, a deputy sheriff in Gainesville, Florida, stirred controversy at this meeting by predicting that Johnson would never run as fast again without the help of steroids.

Despite the drug scandal



BEN JOHNSON

and the humiliation Canadians felt at the time, Johnson was a clear favourite of the near capacity crowd of 6,000 in a converted hockey arena in Canada's capital city.

Johnson, who has pledged to speak out against the use of drugs and has vowed to win back his gold medal at the 1992 Olympics was mobbed by autograph-hungry kids before and after the race.

Johnson told reporters later he was still not satisfied with his racing mechanics.

"I've been out for two years ... It takes time to adjust", Johnson said after the run as

he got a from his mother and a standing ovation from the crowd. "I'll just have to work on my starts".

"He's coming back", said Johnson's coach, Loren Seagrave.

"But he's still got lots of work to do. This is just another step on a long road back."

Romania lift Nehru Cup

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, Jan 27: A sparkling Romania dethroned Hungary to lift the glittering Nehru Gold Cup here today, reports PTI.

In the 90 minutes of trial of strength, which kept the holiday crowd glued to their seats, Romania defeated the defending champions, Hungary, by a convincing margin of three goals to one to register their maiden victory in the 9th Jawaharlal Nehru International Gold Cup football tournament at the Chandrasekharan Nair Stadium.

It was a proud moment for them as they received the trophy from the hands of Kerala Sports Minister, Neelalohithadassan Nadar.

The men who made Romania's victory possible were Marian Gaby Raduta, Stan Ilie and Lon Visdotu.

Osaka marathon

OSAKA, Jan 27: Seoul Olympic bronze medalist Katria Dorre of Germany won the 1991 Osaka International women's marathon with a time of two hours 27 min 43 sec, reports AFP.

Japan's Yuko Arimoto, in her second outing in the full marathon, was second in 2:28:01, and China's Chen Quimen came in third in 2:29:44.

Div II volleyball

Sports Reporter

Victoria Sporting Club and Nabajatak Majlees won their respective matches in the Second Division volleyball league yesterday at the volleyball stadium.

Victoria humbled Dhaka Wanderers Club 15-3, 15-5 and 15-4 while Nabajatak beat Bangladesh Bank by 3-1 sets, 15-3, 15-7, 11-15 and 15-4 points.

TODAY'S MATCHES

East End vs Jiban Bima (5:30pm)
Shantibagh vs Partners Club (6:30pm)



Patty Fendick (L) and Mary Joe Fernandez (R) receive the championship trophy for the women's doubles at the Australian Open after defeating Czech Jana Novotna and Gigi Fernandez of the US in straight sets, 7-6, 6-1, yesterday.

PDB sports on

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The annual athletics competition of the Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) began at the Rajarbagh Police Lines ground yesterday.

Presidential Advisor for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Prof. Wahiduddin Ahmed inaugurated the two-day