

WEEKEND SPORTS WEEKEND

Will Wilander rise again?

I think the mix is still too conservative," said record producer Keith Lentin, sitting in a listening room at Summa Studios on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles. "I spent 13 hours listening yesterday, and I realised that we never went over the top. We have to go over the top." "Like how?" asked Chris Seldon, Mats Wilander's friend and collaborator on the record at issue. "What do you want us to do?"

"Listen to this cut from U-2," Lentin said, reaching for the boom box. "Listen to Bono's voice — listen to the aura around it."

"Yeah, but we're not U-2," Seldon muttered.

"I know that. But the point is, we don't sound like an exciting band. We're close, but it's not there. Not yet." Wilander slouched deep in the couch absorbing every word but saying nothing. Later, when Lentin again cued up the Wilander/Seldon song Story of You for comparison, Wilander did what he does best on a tennis court. He concentrated. A deep furrow appeared on his forehead, like he'd been hit flat between the eyes with a hatchet. Beyond the sliding doors of the balcony, it was clear, bright, balmy winter day — a perfect day for tennis. All over Southern California, doctors, lawyers and studio chiefs were trying to be tennis players. And in Summa Studios on Sunset, one tennis player — and oh, what a player at that — was trying no less mightily to be a musician.

It's a story of you ... so sweet Me and you ... in the heat it's a story of you ... so sweet We are through ... incomplete. To many tennis fans, the Story of Mats, like the relationship he describes in Story of You is incomplete. In 1988, after flirting with the World No. 1 ranking for several years, he came within three victories of recording the first Grand Slam since Rod Laver accomplished the feat in 1969.

Wilander won the Australian and French and US Open titles, and he reached the quarter-finals at Wimbledon.

Centrepiece: The centerpiece of Wilander's magnificent season was his showdown with (then) No. 1 Ivan Lendl in the US Open final. In a breathtaking display of skill, intelligence and determination, Wilander played the match of a lifetime to topple Lendl and wrest away his top ranking. But Wilander's stay at the top was short-lived. For years he had been reluctant to reach the ultimate ranking, knowing that for a man of his disposition the fulfillment of a dream usually meant the death of it, too.

Although Wilander won a small tournament in Sicily shortly after the '88 Open, he would hold the top spot for only 16 weeks. Early in '89, he began an astonishing free fall through the rankings, plummeting as far as No. 70 by mid-October 1990.

Wilander pulled his ranking

Mats Wilander was right at the top of the pro tennis heap when he decided to walk away from the demands and the pressures of being No. 1. His free fall through the rankings astonished many, but Wilander himself was unperturbed. He says that he took a break to indulge in his hobby, which is music. As for his tennis, he says he has not really made a serious comeback effort yet. Peter Bodo takes a look at the Mats Wilander of today.



Wilander on a different stage. He plays the rhythm guitar in his troupe.

up with a runner-up finish (to the Swiss player Marc Rosset) at Lyon, France. Then he won his first tournament since '88 at Itapirica, Brazil, in November of 1990 to finish the year ranked No. 41. Nevertheless, people continued to shake their heads and ask, "What's the story with Mats?"

"I think even the other players were a little surprised by how far down Mats went," says Wilander's compatriot, John McEnroe. "On the other hand, his approach to the game always was different. When I became No. 1, holding onto what I had became an obsession, and it definitely took a toll on my life."

"Mats (placed) more of an emphasis on becoming No. 1 than staying there. His reaction to getting to the top was to up and walk away from the demands and the pressure of the ranking."

Of course, nobody can walk away from the pressures of such an achievement because they have a way of hunting you down. As Wilander explained in Los Angeles, "After the '88 Open, I actually thought I could unplug the telephone for five months and then start again, but it doesn't work that

way. I was reminded every week that I was going to be coming back soon I wasn't playing officially, but then I had obligations to exhibitions and things like that, so it was a one-foot-in, one-foot-out situation. I really needed a break, but I never really felt like I got away."

"I know people are wondering, 'What happened to Wilander?' But that doesn't bother me. As far as I'm concerned, I haven't really made a serious comeback effort yet. I just wish people would relax, not feel like they have to make a judgement I wish they'd let me do my own thing and not judge me until a decent amount of time has passed."

And just how long is "a decent amount" of time? "It's hard to say," Wilander said, shrugging. He smiled ironically as he added, "Probably right after people have stopped asking about what's wrong with me."

"There's a lot more room for communication in music, but tennis is definitely an act of self-expression, too," Wilander said over breakfast one morning at Ben Frank's, a burger joint on Sunset with decor circa The Jetsons. "A lot of times in a match I'd find

myself wondering what kind of music my opponent would play."

"I've played guitar with John (McEnroe) and his music is just like his tennis. He plays loud, screaming lead guitar. I play music like I play tennis, too. Not flashy, not loud. I do all my composing on an acoustic guitar. And as much as I'd like to be in the mainstream, I simply didn't want tennis to dominate his life as it dominates the lives of so many players. The other passengers of Wilander's own fast lane were people like Rolling Stones' guitarist Keith Richards, and a rock-and-roll style of life left Wilander with plenty of artistic raw material. It's impossible to listen to his songs without thinking about the rumours of discord in his marriage of four years to a New York-based model, the former Sonya Mulholland. And it would be naive to think that Wilander hasn't been exposed to his fair share of drugs. They come with the territory. "Our lyrics are pretty open ended," he like to play lead, I've got the personality of a rhythm guitarist. So that's what I play."

In typical self-effacing fashion, Wilander describes his passion for music as a "hobby," comparing it to Lendl's love of golf. But at the end of '90, Wilander took his hobby to the limit: he holed up in L.A. for nearly a month with his partner Seldon to record a five-song EP, which will be dis-

Wide range: The songs on the EP range from the dark, almost macabre, Story of You to a quintessential driving tune, a power-pop gem called

Doomsday's Child. Then there is Nar Man Har Funnit Gladien, a Swedish ballad that builds inexorably to a wrenching, spacious instrumental and emotional crescendo.

The general influences here are not those of popular commercial artists like Phil Collins or even Bruce Springsteen, but those of darker, brooding bands like The Jesus and Mary Chain, Echo and Bunnymen, even The Doors. Wilander's and Seldon's songs touch on such painful topics as separation, betrayal and loneliness. They are a far cry from the lame stuff you would expect from a tennis champion indulging a hobby comparable to golf. Although Wilander's experiences in tennis provided some material, he learned that artistic efforts are rarely stimulated by the good times.

"It's a lot easier to sit down and write a song when you're angry or sad about something," he says. "When you're happy and on top of what you're doing, there's not much reason to sit down and write about it. You don't brood over things then. I mean, there aren't that many happy songs out there. Ninety per cent of them come when you're down."

Those sentiments and Wilander's songs underscore the degree to which Wilander is anything but a typical tennis champion. They didn't spring from the athletic cum celebrity but from the young man who never sought the lifestyle of the rich and famous. For instance, Wilander celebrated his first appearance in the Masters in 1983 not at some pricey upper East Side Manhattan haunt but at Bando's, a funky East Village hangout for aspiring musicians and artists.

While Wilander always sought to lead a "normal" life, he never meant that he wanted to be in the mainstream. He simply didn't want tennis to dominate his life as it dominates the lives of so many players. The other passengers of Wilander's own fast lane were people like Rolling Stones' guitarist Keith Richards, and a rock-and-roll style of life left Wilander with plenty of artistic raw material. It's impossible to listen to his songs without thinking about the rumours of discord in his marriage of four years to a New York-based model, the former Sonya Mulholland. And it would be naive to think that Wilander hasn't been exposed to his fair share of drugs. They come with the territory. "Our lyrics are pretty open ended," he like to play lead, I've got the personality of a rhythm guitarist. So that's what I play."

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said, when we discussed the sources of his inspiration. "They relate to specific experiences in my life, but the whole point is to make them flexible, something everybody can relate to. That's what any really good song does."

As we parted after lunch, Wilander added, "Do me a favour — don't try to interpret the lyrics. I always hated when people tried to figure out a guy's life from the songs he writes."

Mats Wilander does not miss being at the top of the tennis heap, but he does miss the great hit of exultation and emotion that come from playing well in big tournaments.

And he misses his fellow Swedes, the Nystroms and Jarryds and Pernforses who are no longer the dominant players they once were. One of the few things that broke through the haze of creativity while Wilander put in 14- and 16-hour days in the studio was news of Jarryd's victory in the Austrian Open. "Wasn't that great?" Wilander said, his eyes suddenly coming to life. "He beat Muster and Skoff. He beat Skoff 1,3 and 1 in the final."

No conflict: contemplating his future, Wilander sees no conflict between his musical and tennis aspirations. "I wanted to make this record partly to get it out of my system. Now that it's done, I can concentrate on tennis. Ironically, the only problems I see is the decision I'd have to make if this really goes over well. But I don't really see this as being that big."

Wilander feels that the time spent playing poorly and languishing at the journeyman's level of the game were learning experiences. "You always hear that when you stop playing well your phone stops ringing and that's when you find out who your real friends are. You know it will happen, but you still aren't prepared for the emotions that come with



Wilander the striving musician.

"Then you have to deal with the way other players see you. The guy ranked like No. 50 knows what you've done, but you're suddenly just like him. He feels he can relate to you, where he was too intimidated to even say hello before, even though you still may not even know his name."

"In this one tournament, I played some guy who made a big deal about a close line call in our match. I thought, 'What's he making such a big deal about, this is just some first-round match in a small tournament.' But for the No. 50 player in the world, a first-round match is like a big final."

Wilander knows that he has a champion's heart and a champion's game. If he is properly motivated, he should be in or near the top five. He knows that if he can't break back into that elite circle, his days in tennis are numbered.

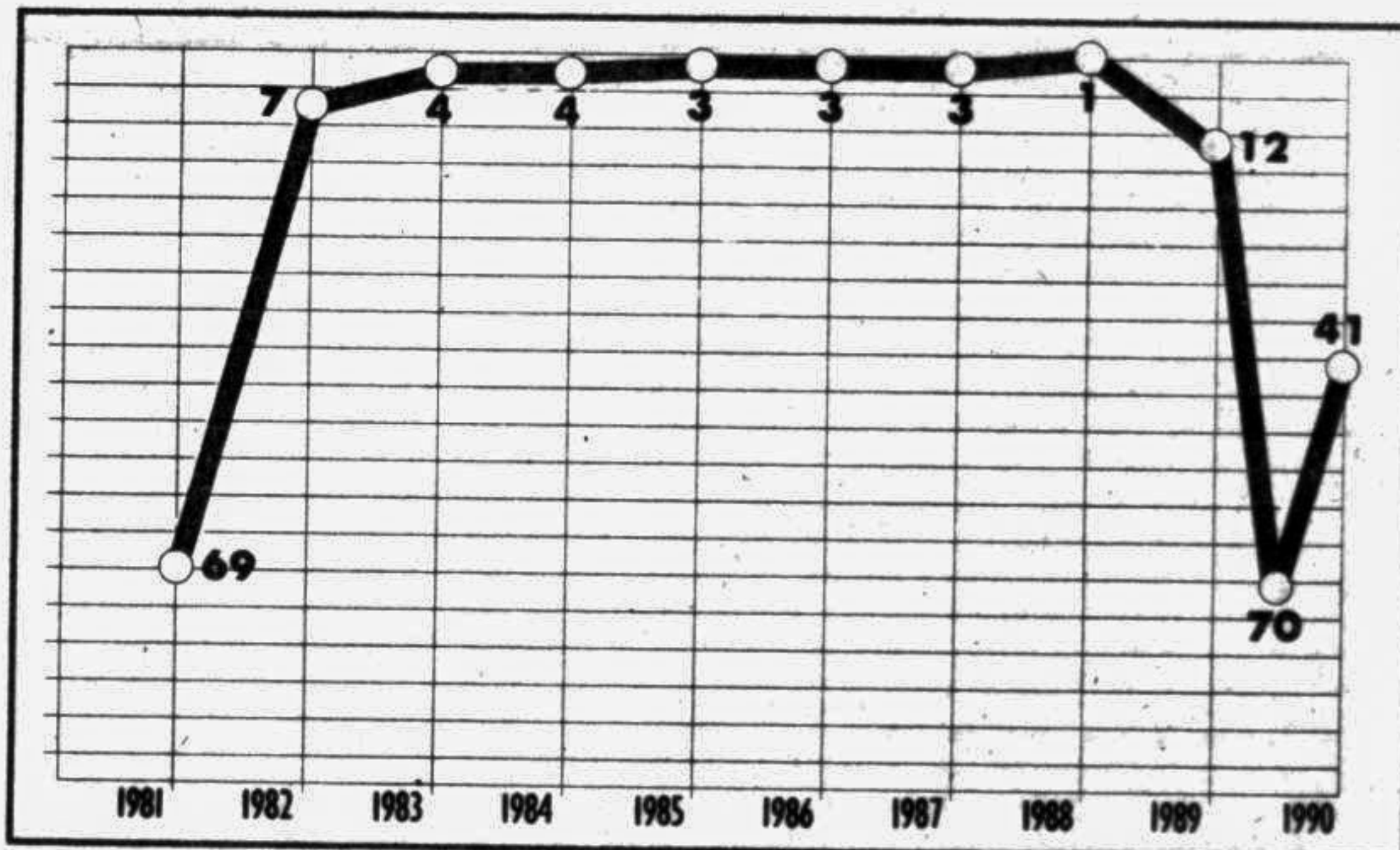
He agrees with the theory that his victory over Lendl at the '88 US Open was more than a great win that got him the top ranking. Given all the

conditions and nuances of the meeting, it was eerily close to a perfect performance.

"That match was a great thing and an awful thing. I wish people would understand that I would have loved to stay. No. 1 for another two years, but I had nothing left to give. I wish they would see how human it is to have a letdown after a situation like that, where you realise your lifelong dream."

Sure Lendl handled things differently — he's a different person. So is McEnroe and Connors and Borg. What am I supposed to do, consider myself some kind of failure? But I don't feel bitter, because the bottom line is that I wasn't playing for anyone else I was playing for myself."

Wilander still is playing for himself, like any artist worth the name. But for now it is with a guitar as well as a racket. Both of them are instruments that will play a dream — a spent one or a fresh one, an old or a new episode in the still incomplete Story of Mats.



The graph tells the tale. The rise and fall and rise(?) of the Swedish ace.

Aussies in the Caribbean: The championship decider

ALLAN Border has seen it all before. So have Dean Jones, Greg Matthews and Terry Alderman. These four are the only survivors of Australia's test tour to West Indies, in 1983-84. Border will be happy that so few of his team can recall that trip, which was something of a disaster for the Australians. It was their first tour for many years without any of the great triumvirate of Greg Chappell, Dennis Lillee and Rod Marsh. No team could reasonably have expected to replace such great names overnight, and predictably Kim Hughes' side struggled.

Equally predictably, they picked up some nasty injuries: South African-born Kepler Wessels played in the first two Tests before injuring a knee, and his replacement Graeme Wood fractured a finger in his only Test of the tour. In the final Test Steve Smith, an under-rated player who now plays his cricket in South Africa, had his left-hand little finger broken by Joel Garner.

West Indies, with Clive Lloyd still at the helm, won that 1983-84 series 3-0, and they might have won the other two Tests as well, had rain not intervened. Border himself staved off probable defeat at Port of Spain, with a notable double of 98 and 100, both not out. Remarkably, West Indies did not lose a single second-innings wicket in the entire series.

1977-78 West Indies also won the previous series in the Caribbean, in 1977-78. This

After defeating England 3-0, Allan Border's Australians are already in the Caribbean for a five-Test series against West Indies. The winners will have a strong claim to Test cricket's unofficial world championship. STEVEN LYNCH looks forward to the series, and back at Australia's previous tours of the Caribbean.

time the margin was 3-1, but it was a most unusual rubber. The tour took place in the days of Kerry Packer's unauthorized World Series Cricket, and Australia, spurned of their first choice team, sent a largely inexperienced side to do battle in the Caribbean. Australia were led by the veteran Bobby Simpson (who also captained the 1964-65 tourists). Simpson, nearly 42 and out of first-class cricket for 10 years, had returned at the request of the Australian Board, and had led his young team to an enthralling 3-2 win at home against India. West Indies, though, were a different proposition. At first, they chose all their Packer players, and romped to three-day victories in the first two Tests.

A dispute between the West Indies Board and the Packer players led to a mass withdrawal from the third Test in Guyana. Now it was West Indies turn to field an inexperienced side, containing six players new to Test Cricket. Australia won that match thanks to splendid centuries from Graeme Wood and Craig Serjeant. The new-look West Indians, now led by Alvin Kalichman (who, like Australian vice-captain Jeff Thomson, had managed to extricate himself from his

Packer contract), bounced back to win the fourth Test, and with it the series. Simpson, in what turned out to be positively his final Test, held the upper hand in the final match, at Kingston, but a crowd riot and communication problems with the umpires prevented the Aussies ending the tour with a deserved victory.

1972-73 Ian Chappell had been at the helm for Australia's previous tour of West Indies, in 1972-73. The team which was to dominate most of the 1970s had taken shape in England in 1972: Stackpole, Redpath, Ian and Greg Chappell, Walters, Edwards and Marsh represented a strong batting side, and the bowling was expected to be looked after by Lillee and Massie, the heroes of the English tour. But it didn't turn out that way. Massie lost rhythm and control and, astonishingly, hardly surfaced again in first-class cricket. Lillee went down with the back injury which threatened his career, and failed to take a wicket in his only Test of the tour. The lesser lights, medium-pacers Max Walker and Jeff Hammond and leg-spinners Terry Jenner and Kerry O'Keefe, did enough in conjunction with the batsmen

to see Australia to a 2-0 series victory over a West Indian side in transition. Led by Rhan Kanhai in the absence of Garry Sobers, whose unbroken run of 85 Tests was ended by a dispute over his fitness with the West Indian Board, the home side lacked any bowlers of Genuine pace, the commodity with was to take



Bobby Simpson, who captained the 1964-65 and 1977-78 touring teams, returns to the West Indies this time as Australia's coach.

West Indies to the top of the Test tree before the end of the decade — ironically at the expense of the Australians.

1964-65 Chappell's tour was eight

long years after the previous Australian visit, in 1964-65. Bobby Simpson, in his first incarnation, led the tourists in another so-called "world championship" battle. The sides on display make the mouth water: Simpson, Lawry, Cowper, O'Neill, Booth, Grout and McKenzie for Australia, and Hunte, Kanhai, Sobers, Butcher, Nurse, Hall, Griffith and Gibbs for the home side. The fast bowling of Hall and Griffith, in their differing styles, proved decisive: West Indies won the first and third Tests, and although Australia scored well in the other matches — and won the fifth Test — West Indies took out the series 2-1. Simpson (201) and Lawry (210) shared a first wicket stand of 382 at Bridgetown, where Australia ran up 650 for 6, but, crucially, the experienced opening pair failed in the two matches which Australia lost.

1954-55

The first Australian Test tour of West Indies took place in 1954-55. Victoria's Ian Johnson was the tourists' captain. On perfect pitches, batsmen reigned supreme; and the batsmen on show were indeed supreme artists. Clyde Walcott reeled off scores of 108 and 39, 126 and 110, 8 and 73, 15 and 83 and 155 and 110: 827 runs at 82.70, yet his team lost the series 3-0! And they were saved from an even bigger beating by an epic seventh-wicket stand of 347 by captain Denis Atkinson (219) and Clairmonte Depaeza (122)

at Bridgetown.

A record 21 centuries were scored in that five-match series, a record 12 of them by Australia (Walcott's five in one series in another record). Australia's totals were as follows: 515 (Harvey 133, Miller 147) and 20 for 1 (won by nine wickets); 600 for 9 dec (McDonald 110, Morris 111, Harvey 133; drawn); 257 and 133 for 2 (drawn); 668 (Miller 137, Lindwall 118) and 249 (drawn); and finally at Kingston, the piece de resistance: 758 for 8 dec (McDonald 127, Harvey 204, Miller 109, Archer 128, Benaud 121; won by an innings and 82 runs).

As ever, it is hard to tear oneself away from dreams of Lindwall and Miller, the three Ws, Sobers, Benaud and the rest. But a new Test series is almost upon us: one which will see the victors awarding themselves the unofficial tag of "world champions". Who will win? Australia's batsmen must perform better than they did against England, where the top six in England's batting order outscored their Australian counterparts in the first innings of four of the five Tests (the least said about the bottom five in the England order the better, however!) The Aussie bowlers, too, must recapture their Ashes form. But would anyone seriously hazard a bet against a side which includes batsmen like Greenidge, Haynes, Richardson, Richards and Logie, and bowlers like Ambrose, Marshall and Bishop? I don't think I shall.

Ruddock's mum is a very angry lady



TORONTO, Mar 20: Donovan "Razor" Ruddock's mother, Louise, is fighting mad.

She said Tuesday she has no doubt that "Donovan was cheated" in his fight with former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson.

She blamed promoter Don King, "the Americans" and, most of all, referee Richard Steele, who stopped the fight in the seventh round, giving Tyson a technical knockout.

Ruddock is a Jamaican-born Canadian citizen.

"If Tyson knocked Donovan down and counted him out, I'd say, well, all right, someone has to win and someone lose," Louise Ruddock said. "But a fight like that... there is no way I'm going to appreciate that kind of fight."

Her explanation?

"He couldn't take Donovan in the first few rounds so the referee had to do something to save the fight."

When Tyson didn't win in the first rounds, she said, "my son was going to win but they didn't want that."

"Don King didn't want to remove that special referee. What is so great about him that they couldn't use another?"

It was a setup.

She said King wanted Tyson to win so that he could fight for the heavyweight title against the winner of next month's bout between champion Evander Holyfield and George Foreman, all of whom are Americans.

"We are Canadians and they are Americans and they don't want the belt to come to Canada," she said. "Even if Donovan killed Tyson they wouldn't let the title come to Canada."

"They want it to stay in America because they are very selfish."

Louise Ruddock doesn't want her son in a rematch with Tyson.

"I don't want him to fight any more Americans because they'd just do the same thing again," she said. "They've done it to other fighters."

"The head of the stream is dirty and if the head is dirty, the whole stream becomes dirty."

She said she didn't go to the fight in Las Vegas on Monday night, or even watch it on closed-circuit television because every time he is going to fight I get nervous, I feel too nervous to watch.

"I don't like fighting too much at all," she said.