

England-Pakistan first Test from today

Edgbaston may be England's best chance



LONDON, June 3: England manager Mickey Stewart, beginning his last series in the job, says he wants Pakistan's injured strike team of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis to play in the first Test starting Thursday at Edgbaston, reports AP.

But Stewart must know England's chances of winning its first Test against Pakistan for 10 years will be lessened by the bowlers' return.

"Cricket will be the winner if both sides are able to field full strength line-ups," Stewart said. "This should be a very fine Test series, and I want Pakistan to be at their best for each game."

The Edgbaston Test could be England's best chance of the five in the series. Neither Waqar nor Akram are fully fit, and Pakistan manager Intikhab Alam said Tuesday he may wait until an hour before the start of play before deciding whether to field the two.

Waqar has recovered well from a stress fracture of the back suffered in January, but has played only one first-class game, against English county Middlesex last week, since the start of the year. Akram suf-

fered shin splints last month, and was not expected to be fit for the first Test.

But Akram, 26, on Wednesday, removed plaster from the injured right leg last Friday, and practised in the nets Tuesday.

Akram bowled gingerly in the nets at Lord's on Tuesday but said afterwards he was satisfied with his first workout since his stress-fractured shin

was diagnosed two weeks ago.

There was no pain or pressure from my leg and it felt good to be out of plaster, he said.

"There is another full day of practice tomorrow and I will step up the pace then and push myself more."

"I am preparing myself for a Test match, unless I am advised otherwise."

Pakistan team manager Intikhab Alam said: "Wasim looked good, considering that his leg only came out of plaster last Friday. We are prepared to leave any decision right up to an hour before the start of play."

Both teams practice Wednesday at Edgbaston, with Akram expected to fully test the leg with a bowling spell.

England captain Graham Gooch, worried about lack of first-class practice this season, had an intensive session in the nets Tuesday. He will open with Alec Stewart.

England all-rounder Derek Pringle had treatment from Essex physiotherapist Jim Davis on Tuesday after injuring his knee in a collision with an advertising board at Worcester at the weekend.

Pringle then joined England's 13-man party in Birmingham and is expected to be fit for selection on Thursday morning.

Former England captain Geoff Boycott, writing Wednesday in England's Sun newspaper, said England should beat Pakistan in four days. Without all-rounder Imran Khan and with injury doubts over Waqar and Akram, Boycott says Pakistan is a "very ordinary bowling side."

"So ordinary that the only way our batsmen can get out is by playing sloppy shots," Boycott says.

England's batsmen, unfortunately for local pride, have shown themselves fully capable of playing "sloppy shots."

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Pakistan squad: Ramiz Raja, Aamir Sohail, Asif Mujtaba, Javed Miandad, Salim Malik, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Wasim Akram, Moin Khan, Mushtaq Ahmed, Aqib Javed, Waqar Younis, Salim Jaffer, Atta-ur-Rehman, and Shoab Mohammad.

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WASEEM AKRAM isled with his first workout since his stress-fractured shin

Douglas denies charges

COLUMBUS, Ohio, June 3: Former world heavyweight boxing champion James "Buster" Douglas has pleaded innocent to drunken driving and other charges stemming from a freeway chase, reports AP.

Douglas, who was champion for 258 days in 1990, was arrested Feb 14 on Interstate 71 on the city's north side.

Jury selection in the Franklin County Municipal Court trial ended Tuesday afternoon. The trial recessed for the day early Tuesday evening and was scheduled to resume Wednesday, the clerk of courts' office said.

Douglas, 32, is charged with drunken driving, speeding and failure to display his driver's license. He pleaded innocent to all charges.

Douglas won the title in February 1990 when he knocked out then-champion Mike Tyson in Japan.

Gower is gracious

LONDON, June 3: David Gower, the former England cricket captain attacked by current skipper Graham Gooch in the latter's recent book, has spoken out in support of Gooch on the eve of the first Test against Pakistan, reports AP.

The Hampshire left-hander, whose attitude was criticised by Gooch, describes the Essex opener as "a good captain" during a television interview due to be screened on Thursday night.

He explains: "Graham has set an example, the way he has gone about his job. He has set the principles he wants laid down, the way people behave and conduct themselves on the cricket field and he has reaped the rewards."

Gower refuses to alter his views, despite Gooch's extraordinary public attack, in

which he also states him for not giving enough to the England team.

"Graham is single-minded, said Gower. "He won't be swayed by public opinion, however strong. The timing of the book was unfortunate, but I don't believe he made the criticisms of me just to sell books. He's a man of principle."

Gower has not ruled out playing for England again, even though Gooch doubts whether he would fit into the current set-up and the authorities have not made it easy.

They wanted evidence of commitment, but that's a vague term," he said. "It's not easy to prove."

Gooch could yet face disciplinary action from the Test and County Cricket Board for his comments following a complaint by Hampshire.

Seles' mind is on Wimbledon

PARIS, June 3: The court is clay, not grass, but Monica Seles is already thinking of the only



MONICA SELES

Grand Slam tournament she hasn't won.

"Hopefully we got enough rain here in Paris so we don't have to go through that in London this year," Seles said after another downpour disrupted play Tuesday at the French Open, reports AP.

After whipping Jennifer Capriati in straight sets to advance to the semifinals on the red clay courts of Stade Roland Garros, Seles said she also has Wimbledon on her mind.

"This is a tournament that I haven't won yet," Seles said of the grass court tournament called simply The Championships. "I would love to win it. It is an extra special Grand Slam tournament."

She bypassed Wimbledon last year, withdrawing on short notice. Speculation as to the reason ran rampant before she emerged from seclusion a few weeks later to say she had shin splints.

Last year she won the Australian, French and US Open titles, missing a chance at the Grand Slam because she skipped Wimbledon. This year, Seles intends to go to London.

"I cannot put so much emphasis on it to win it, because I'll have pressure on me with all the things that happened last year. So I just really got to go in there and try to do the best I can," she said.

Seles has not made it past the quarterfinals at Wimbledon, playing there last in 1990 when she lost to Zina Garrison to end a 36-match, six-tournament winning streak.

Seles knows things on the grass of the All-England Club will be different from the clay courts of Roland Garros.

"Going in there, if I don't change my philosophy of how I should play on grass, I think I will have a tougher time," she said.

She even senses a threat from Capriati, although she rolled over the 16-year-old Floridian 6-2, 6-2, in 60 minutes in their quarterfinal Tuesday.

"She has a very strong serve, and they go in most of the time," Seles said. "It's going to be even harder to return them on grass, so she has a big advantage."

"She has done great last year in Wimbledon, so I have no reason why she couldn't do well this year. ... She definitely has the game for it. There is no question."

Seles questioned the influence that fathers of players such as Capriati and Mary Pierce have on their daughters while performing as coaches.

"You see so many players coached by their parents, their fathers," she said. "Just don't push the child. I think a lot of parents of young children are doing that. I don't think it is worth anything because the child has to love the game."



Argentinian Gabriela Sabatini returns a forehand to Spanish opponent Conchita Martinez during her quarter-final match at the French Open Tuesday. Sabatini will meet Seles in the semifinals. —AFP photo

It's a re-run in women's semis



PARIS, June 3: For the women, it's rematch time at the French Open. For the men, it's hurry up

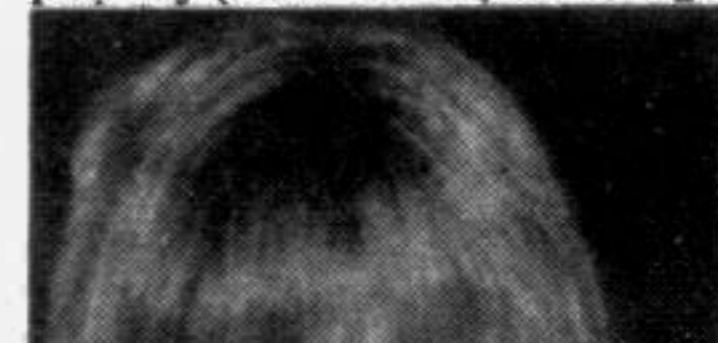
and wait, reports AP. While rain delayed the men's quarterfinals, the four top-seeded women won their matches Tuesday to set up a re-run of last year's semifinals.

In one pairing Thursday, top seeded Monica Seles will try again to get past Gabriela Sabatini en route to a third straight title. In the other, No. 2 seed Steffi Graf will try to avenge her worst-ever pro defeat, a 6-0, 6-2 loss on Centre Court last year to Arantxa Sanchez Vicario.

Among the women, Graf probably has the strongest motivation as she seeks to make amends for last year's semifinal embarrassment. That was the second time she'd lost on Centre Court here to Sanchez Vicario — the first was when the Spaniard won the title as a 17-year-old in 1989.

"This is a different year, and we're both playing well,"

Sanchez Vicario said. "I've beaten her here both times on Centre Court, and I feel very comfortable. I'm just going to play my game and try to be aggressive and see if I can win."



STEFFI GRAF

Graf found reason for satisfaction in her 6-3, 6-7 (7-4), 6-3 victory Tuesday over Natalia Zvereva, even though it included her first loss of a set in five matches.

"I am definitely in the shape I want to be," she said. "I think I needed to have a tough, close match, which will definitely help me for the next one."

Sabatini also lost her first set of the tournament and trailed 0-3 in the second set before making a spectacular comeback Tuesday to beat sev-



ARANTXA SANCHEZ

enth-seeded Conchita Martinez, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2. In her first four matches, Sabatini had lost only nine games.

"Before, I didn't have any tough player to play against," she said. "Now that I've had a tough match, I'm more prepared for the next."

The next will bring her up against Seles, who had little

trouble Tuesday beating error-prone Jennifer Capriati, 6-2, 6-2.

Though Seles has lost only two of her 38 matches this season, one was to Sabatini on clay at the Italian Open last month.

"Gaby is sure playing great tennis," Seles said. "I saw her play today and she is in good form."

"My form, it's hard to say," said Seles, whose showing here has lifted her past the \$5 million career earnings mark. "The court here is different, a lot of things are different, so I have a little bit of a better chance."

Seles beat Sabatini 6-4, 6-1 in last year's semifinal, then topped Sanchez Vicario, 6-3, 6-4 for the title.

Leicester blame Northants pitch

LONDON, June 3: Captain Nigel Briars complained bitterly about the state of the pitch after Leicestershire were dismissed for the lowest championship score of the season and 22 wickets fell during the day at Northampton on Tuesday, reports Reuters.

Umpires Alan Whitehead and Gerald Stickey will decide if any action is to be taken against Northamptonshire but Briars stormed, "It seems

there has been a deliberate attempt to get a result."

Northants cricket director Mike Procter, the former South African all-rounder, retorted. "If Briars wants to indulge in sour grapes that's his prerogative — it's a good cricket wicket."

Leicestershire were skittled out for 77, former England all-rounder David Capel and Kevin Curran leading the demolition with three wickets each.

Earlier, the home side had also struggled. They mustered just 117 but still finished the

day 96 runs ahead after reaching 56 for two in their second innings.

Dutch paceman Jan-Paul Bakker, playing only because of injuries to Malcolm Marshall and Kevin Shine, marked his first championship outing of the season with a four-wicket haul for leaders Hampshire against Yorkshire at Basingstoke.

It earned them maximum bowling points as Yorkshire were fired out for 210, Bakker claiming four for 38. In reply, Hampshire reached 30 without loss.

Elsewhere, there were runs galore with Middlesex leading the way as opener Mike Roseberry blasted a career-best 148 to help his side to 410 for two against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge.

He shared a sparkling stand of 266 in 70 overs with West Indian skipper Desmond Haynes, who was finally dismissed for a stylish 114. Roseberry cracked 15 boundaries and two sixes.

Andy Moles (122) and Dominic Ostler (108) enjoyed themselves as Warwickshire piled up 340 for five against Sussex at Hove.

The pair, who thumped 30 boundaries between them, put on 193 in just 57 overs.

Boogert upsets Zina Garrison

BECKENHAM, England, June 3: Former Wimbledon finalist Zina Garrison suffered an upset defeat on her return to grass court tennis Tuesday when she tumbled 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to Dutch teenager Kristie Boogert in the second round of the Beckenham tournament, reports AP.

The 18-year-old Boogert, ranked 203, fully 190 places below the experienced American, overcame the loss of the first set to overpower Garrison, who lost to Martina Navratilova in the 1990 Wimbledon final.

Mary Joe Fernandez, top seeded at the tournament, surrendered the second set to Australian Kristine Radford after a confident start but steadied her game to take the match 6-0, 4-6, 6-3.

Veteran Pam Shriver breezed into the third round with a 6-0, 6-2 triumph over Ireland's Siobhan Nicholson.

Fans hoping to see defending champion Ivan Lendl in the men's competition were disappointed. Because of lengthy rain delays on Monday, Lendl's opening appearance in the second round was put off until Wednesday.

Agassi in semis at Sampras' cost



PARIS, June 3: Andre Agassi, chasing his first Grand Slam title, powered past struggling Pete Sampras on a rain-dampened court Wednesday to reach the French Open semifinals for the third straight year, reports AP.

A loss in a first-set tiebreak seemed to subdue Sampras, and Agassi breezed to a 7-6 (7-5), 6-2, 6-1 victory in just under two hours. Agassi won the last six games of the third set, which took only 28 minutes.

Sampras' usually potent serve often failed him, and Agassi — with a stronger backhand — had the edge in baseline exchanges.

Sampras was seeded third,

based on his world ranking as a hard-court maestro, but Agassi, the No. 11 seed, was favoured due to his virtuosity on clay.

The two Americans had split their previous six matches, but Agassi had won the two played on clay.

The match began more than an hour late because of rain and was halted for 30 minutes at the start of the third set by another shower. Both players had asked for a delay, and Agassi borrowed an umbrella from a fan to make his point.

Agassi has reached the finals here the past two years, losing in 1990 to Andrei Gornes and last year to Jim Courier.

Courier, back as the No. 1 seed, was next on the sched-

ule, resuming his suspended match with eighth-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia. Agassi will play the winner.

Rain has now disrupted play on seven of the 10 days of the tournament. Officials said it was the most rain-disrupted French Open since 1973, when the final, won by Romania's Ilie Nastase, was played two days late.

It appeared at least one of

the last two men's quarterfinals might be pushed back to Thursday. Henri Leconte of France was scheduled to play Nicklas Kulti of Sweden and Andrei Cherkasov of Russia was paired against Czechoslovakia's seventh-seeded Petr Korda, the only seed left in the bottom half of the draw.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a solution key at the bottom.

Cryptoquip puzzle grid with letters and numbers for solving.

CRYPTOQUIP FM FL I TWUIL SWFOU LZ OIVU I VFAAFGT FG LKU MLZSV OIWVUL? Today's Cryptoquip clue: V equals K The Cryptoquip is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.