

Olympic solidarity course begins in city

Sports Reporter

The second five-day Olympic Solidarity sports leadership course got underway at the National Sports Council conference room yesterday.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadek Hossain Khoka inaugurated the programme as chief guest.

Forty-two participants are attending the course under IOC instructor WK Low of Hong Kong.

President of the Bangladesh Olympic Association (BOA) Gias Kamal Chowdhury, BOA vice-president Captain (ret'd) Siddiq Ahmed and the secretary general of the BOA Bashir Ahmed also attended the opening ceremony.

The first five-day course was held from September 6 to 10 in Chittagong.



World number one Monica Seles beams with the women's singles trophy which she retained by beating Spaniard Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in the US Open final at Flushing Meadow in New York Saturday. —Star TV photo by TA Khan

Seles removes all the doubts

NEW YORK, Sept 13: Monica Seles put to rest questions about her form and her health and reinforced her status as the top women's player in the world by beating Arantxa Sanchez Vicario in straight sets on Saturday to retain her US Open title, reports Reuter.

Seles, weakened by a virus during the Open fortnight and a losing finalist in her last three events, held off a gritty challenge by Sanchez to post a 6-3, 6-3 victory that brought her a 500,000 US dollar prize and her third Grand Slam title of the year.

In full voice after being pained by an upper respiratory infection that had given her a sore throat and a bad case of the sniffles, Seles was grunting with her old relish on Centre Court as she out-slugged the fifth-seeded Spaniard in one hour 30 minutes.

"It feels wonderful, I had a wonderful two weeks," said Seles before accepting the silver trophy and holding it aloft to the cheers of the packed crowd at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

Seles, whose Grand Slam record this year was marred only by a defeat to Steffi Graf in the Wimbledon final, dominated Sanchez early in both sets.

But Sanchez, the first Spaniard to play in an Open final, fought back brilliantly and made the 18-year-old Yugoslav bear down, extending her to a sixth match point before Seles claimed her sixth Grand Slam title in the last seven she has competed in.

"It's just great winning two in a row," said Seles, who last year beat four-time winner Martina Navratilova in the final.

"When the draw came out, it was a tough draw and I didn't know whether I could do it," said Seles, who as it turned out faced only one seeded player on her way to the final after upsets removed Olympic champion Jennifer Capriati and 1990 champion Gabriela Sabatini from her path.

Sanchez, loser of her first 10 career matches against Seles, beat the Yugoslav last month in the final of the Canadian Open and had said that would lift her confidence.

"At the start I was a little nervous, I don't know why. I wanted to win the points very quickly and I made mistakes," said Sanchez, who was charged with 43 unforced errors in the match against just 23 for Seles. "I was in a little bit of a rush today. Maybe I wanted to do it too fast, too quick, and made errors. I was not the same as I was the last time I beat her. I was more patient and waited for the right opportunities before."

Seles raced out to a 5-0 lead in the opening set before Sanchez settled down.

Sanchez, the 1989 French Open champion, double faulted to give the top-seeded Seles break point in the second game, which the Yugoslav cashed in with a backhand crosscourt winner.

A string of forehand errors led to another Seles break in the fourth game as the world number one claimed a 4-0 lead.

Sanchez finally won her first game by holding serve for 5-1. Hitting with renewed confidence, the 20-year-old Spaniard then scored a service break of her own to draw within 5-2.

The eighth game was a marathon, lasting six deuces. Seles held five set points but was rebuffed each time and Sanchez held for 5-3.

Seles closed out the set on her sixth set point when Sanchez sailed a forehand long to end a lively rally.

Seles wasted no time taking the upper hand again in the second set as she took advantage of two disputed line calls against Sanchez to break at love in the first game.

Sanchez battled her way to duce in the fourth game after falling behind 40-15 in the next game but Seles cranked up her serve for a key winner to hold for 3-1.

The Yugoslav extended her lead by breaking Sanchez in the fifth game when the Spaniard floated a forehand long from 30-40.

Cutting loose with her twofisted groundstrokes and grunts that sounded like war cries, Seles saved two break points on her serve in the next game, and from duce launched a backhand winner down the line that caught speedy Sanchez flat-footed at the centre line. She held for 5-1.

But Sanchez would not go down without a fight.

She survived two match points in the next game as she battled back from 15-40 and in the eighth game she broke Seles to more within 5-3.

Sanchez denied Seles three more times in the next game when the Yugoslav was within a point of winning. A sizzling forehand crosscourt winner on her sixth match point finally ended it and brought Seles yet another Grand Slam crown.

Edberg's escape act pits him against Sampras in final

NEW YORK, Sept 13: Defending champion Stefan Edberg and 1990 winner Pete Sampras will meet in the US Open final Sunday to battle not only for the year's last Grand Slam title and 500,000 US dollar, but for the world number one ranking as well, reports Reuter.

Sampras put on a commanding display of power scrying to avenge his quarter-final loss here last year to top seed Jim Courier, the Australian and French Open champion.

The third seed's impressive 6-1, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 victory will end Courier's reign as the top-ranked player in the world, leaving it up for grabs today.

"That's probably the worst tennis I ever played in a big match. I beat myself out there," said Courier, who struggled from the service line and hit numerous uncharacteristic forehand errors in the two hour 41 minute match.

While Sampras took the last lane into the final, Edberg's road was long, twisting and torturous.

The second-seeded Swede overcame a gusty, never-say-die performance by fourth seed Michael Chang to win a five-set epic 6-7, 7-5, 7-6, 5-7, 6-4 in a US Open record five hours 26 minutes.

Edberg has become the Harry Houdini of tennis at the Open, escaping seemingly impossible predicaments over and over again.

The Swede has now come back from down a break in the fifth set to win his last three matches — and he did it twice on Saturday.

"Anyone would be proud of what I've done so far. I've been in a lot of trouble the past few matches and come out of it."

Edberg said.

"I'm a lot stronger mentally than I was. It feels very good. I'm fighting for my life out there but I am coming through," added Edberg, who won the last four games from 2-4 down in the fifth to end the 60-game epic.

The men's semifinals on "Super Saturday" at the US Open were sandwiched around the women's final in which world number 6-3, 6-3.

In taking her third Grand Slam title of the year, Seles dropped 27 games in seven matches — two less than Edberg lost to Chang on Saturday.

Sampras appeared to be in pain and had some trouble moving late in the final set.

He needed three match points on his serve at 5-2 to finish off Courier and it was later revealed he was suffering from dehydration that caused severe stomach cramps.

But Sampras's coach Tim Cullikson said the American would be ready to go against Edberg.

"He'll be fine, I'm 100 per cent sure he'll play," he said.

Courier, who took the top ranking from Edberg in April, never really got any rhythm going against Sampras. But the third seed did not give him many opportunities.

Sampras dropped just six points off his serve in the opening set, saving the only break point he faced.

Courier played much better in the second set as he broke through to take Sampras's serve twice.

But the former Open champion was back on top in the third and even improved on his first-set form. He lost just three points in four service games and never faced a break point.

Chang and Edberg fought a war of attrition in which serving proved of little advantage to either player.

There were 55 break points and 23 service breaks, 12 for Edberg and 11 for Chang.

Each time one player would take a seemingly commanding lead, he was unable to protect it.

Chang led 5-2 in the first, but Edberg took him to a tiebreak, saving seven set points along the way.



Michael Chang in action during his epic US Open semifinal clash against defending champion Stefan Edberg of Sweden in New York Saturday. Chang lost 7-6, 5-7, 6-7, 7-5, 6-4. —Star TV photo

Courier drops to No. 2

NEW YORK, Sept 13: Jim Courier waved goodbye to his world number one ranking with a shrug of the shoulders on Saturday, reports Reuter.

"C'est la vie," Courier said of the end of his five-month stay atop the rankings after an uninspired 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 loss to Pete Sampras in the US Open semifinals.

Courier put up a lacklustre effort as he tried to hang on to the number one spot which he had held since April 13.

"That is probably the worst tennis I have played in a big match," Courier said of the two hour 41 minute loss against fellow American Sampras, the third seed. "I beat myself out there."

Courier will be replaced as number one by the winner of today's Open final between Sampras and second-seeded Stefan Edberg of Sweden.

Courier, who has fallen on lean times in the last few months, will drop no further than number two.

Since June when he won the French Open title to go with his Australian Open crown, Courier has failed to win.

He lost in the Wimbledon third round to Russian Andrei Olhovskiy and the third round at the Olympics to Marc Rosset of Switzerland. Courier made the final at Indianapolis last month, but lost there, also to Sampras.

"I'm ready for a break," said the 22-year-old Courier.

But before any break Courier will join Sampras, Andre Agassi and John McEnroe for the semifinal Davis Cup tie against Sweden in Minneapolis in two weeks.

"I got a month of after Davis Cup and I can't wait," he said. "I have been going full throttle since the beginning of the year without much rest and I am a little bit tired. I will take a rest and recharge the batteries because I am a little bit on empty at the moment."

Though Courier accepted his demotion placidly, he allowed a bit of anger to slip out before leaving.

"I know I have had the best Grand Slam year of anybody out there and to me that is what makes the number one player in the world," he said.

Agents control African athletes, not federations

VILLENEUVE D'ASCQ, France, Sept 13: African athletics chief Lamine Diack fears that the agents and managers are taking control of the continent's resources, reports AFP.

"Something needs to be done about it. The national federations don't seem to be in control anymore," the African Athletics Confederation president said here on Saturday after only one Kenyan turned up for a highly-touted match against the CIS and France.

"We obviously knocked on the wrong door. Instead of asking the national federations, we should have gone straight to the agents and managers," said Diack.

Ibrahim Kinuthia, a member of Kenya's highly successful cross country team, defended his country's honour by running a 57-second last lap to win the 5,000 m in 13:39.45.

None of the 14 African Olympic medalists invited by Diack showed up.

Perth wants 2002 C'wealth Games

SYDNEY, Sept 13: The Australian city of Perth wants to host the Commonwealth Games in 2002, the domestic news agency Australian Associated Press reported, reports Reuter.

It quoted Graham Edwards, Sports Minister of Western Australia State, as saying he believed Perth had a "second to none" chance of being awarded the Games.

Perth last hosted them in 1962 while the Queensland capital of Brisbane staged them in 1982, the last time the Games were held in Australia.

Edwards said it would cost about Australian 50 million dollar (36 million dollar) to upgrade existing sports facilities and build an Athletes' Village in Perth.

Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, in July lost to Kuala Lumpur in a bid for the right to host the 1998 Commonwealth Games.

Mohsin Smriti Open chess

Sports Reporter
Mohsin Smriti Gold Cup Open chess tournament under the aegis of Narayanangj Recreation Association will begin from September 25 in Narayanangj, says a press release.

Interested players have been asked to contact the Association's office at 50/1 Bangabandhu Lane by September 24.

IOC SOLIDARITY SPORTS LEADERSHIP COURSE BANGLADESH OLYMPIC ASSOCIATION Dhaka: 13-17 September 1992



A five-day Olympic Solidarity course on leadership began at the NSC conference room yesterday. IOC instructor WK Lee of Hong Kong will conduct the course for sports organisers of the country. —Star photo

Weary battlers begin Game 8

SVETI STEFAN, Yugoslavia, Sept 13: Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky got down to work with no fanfare Sunday in the eighth game of their dir 5 million chess rematch, with Spassky hoping to regain the lead in the series tied 2-2, reports AP.

Playing white, Spassky had the initiative and used the King's Indian opening that he employed in Game 2 of the series.

Brilliant defensive play by Fischer in that game threatened to turn the tables on Spassky, but it eventually ended in a draw.

Both contestants looked weary after two weeks of playing, and rumours circulated in this luxurious Adriatic resort that Spassky was feeling ill and had considered postponing Sunday's game.

Match director Janos Kubat said Spassky had complained about some problems with his back and had inquired about the procedure for a postponement, but finally decided to play.

Fischer emerged Saturday with his first victory since the Sept 2 opening, and it was expected to give him a psychological boost after poor play in his previous three games.

King's Indian is considered very dynamic opening, dangerous both for the attacker and the defender. It is a riskier opening than the Queen's Gambit Accepted, which Spassky had favoured in earlier games.

The match is taking place before a sparse audience. The nearly 200 journalists on hand at the beginning of the match has dwindled to only about a dozen, mainly from Yugoslavian newspapers or specialised chess publications.

The match is being played in defiance of international sanctions against Yugoslavia for its role in the war in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina. Fischer has been warned that he can expect possible penalties of a dir 250,000 fine and up to 10 years in prison if he returns home afterwards.

The dir 5 million prize money has been put up by a Yugoslav businessman, Jездimir Vasiljevic, who wanted to draw attention to his plans to create a low-tax, free-trade zone on this 150-acre (60-hectare) resort he has leased from the Montenegrin government.

Fischer considers the match the world championship, because he has never acknowledged being stripped of this title in 1975 by the International Chess Federation for refusing to defend it.

However most observers here say, the level of the play has been far below that played by the federation's current champion, Garry Kasparov, and his two main challengers, Briton Nigel Short and Dutchman Jan Timmon.

An earlier Reuter report said: Chess legend Bobby Fischer beat archrival Boris Spassky with strong final moves in the seventh game of their 5 million dollar rematch on Saturday, levelling the score at 2-2.

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He exchanged a knight for bishop in the 33rd move, sacrificed a pawn in the 35th move but made good on his advantage later with two free pawns.

The first player to score 10 points, draws not being counted, will take the 3.5 million dollar winner's prize in what organisers called the revenge match of the 20th century.

Fischer won his previous encounter with Spassky 20 years ago in Reykjavik to become the first American to take home the world chess crown.

After his 1972 victory, Fischer vanished from the chess scene and his title went three years later to Russian Anatoly Karpov. Fischer re-emerged for the current match.

Chess experts said the 49-year-old Fischer's performance on Saturday showed he had worked hard on his day off on Friday and had taken his losing streak seriously.

He barely staved off a third consecutive defeat in the sixth game on Thursday, managing a draw from an error-prone Spassky. Fischer later assessed his game as "very, very bad."

Before Saturday's game, sources close to the organiser said Fischer had asked a Yugoslav computer expert, Andrija Kolundzic, to guide his strategy for the rest of the match.

For Saturday's game, organisers fulfilled another demand from the American by erecting a glass panel between the players and the audience 15 metres (yards) away.

Fischer also demanded that Spassky be allowed to sit down at the game table only after Fischer himself was already seated.

With the glass panel in place, organisers asked journalists working a floor above the venue to quieten down, saying that chair movements and loud comments were disturbing the players.

But Fischer remained outwardly unperturbed. For the first time in the series he left his chair early in the game, in the ninth move, to go to his box to relax.



BOBBY FISCHER



Arantxa Sanchez Vicario wonders what to do during her US Open singles final against top seed Monica Seles of Yugoslavia in New York on Saturday. Sanchez lost 3-6, 3-6. —Star TV photo