

MSC's sixth on a trot

Sports Reporter
Defending champions Mohammedan Sporting Club maintained their hundred per cent winning record in the ongoing Green Delta First Division hockey league when they posted a 3-0 triumph over Bangladesh Police AC at the Hockey Stadium yesterday.

It was Mohammedans' sixth consecutive victory in the current league. The victors led the first half through a 12th minute goal from Rubel. Sadek, who scored a hat-trick in the previous match against Bachelors Sporting Club, doubled the margin in the 34th minute with a field goal.

Chapal completed the tally in the 59th minute from a penalty corner.

Yesterday, Mohammedans were far from their very best. They managed only four penalty corners in the 70-minute affair.

Police AC, who were dumped 8-0 by Abahani Krira Chakra in their previous game, surprisingly forced three penalty corners. Although they couldn't convert any of them, the fact itself points out the vulnerability of Mohammedan defence.

In the other engagement of the day, Dhaka Mariner Youngs Club overpowered Bangladesh Sporting Club 2-0.

Both the teams fought without success throughout the first half.

Biaka Lusai put the victors ahead in the 42nd minute from a penalty corner and he doubled the margin in the penultimate minute of the game with a field goal.

Abedi Pele may quit Marseille

PARIS, May 29: Ghanaian striker Abedi Pele is likely to leave European Cup winners Marseille at the end of the season, president Bernard Tapie said on Friday, reports Reuter.

"He dreams of playing for a great Italian club," Tapie said. Tapie said Croatian striker Alen Boksic would stay for at least another year.

He said Marseille, who beat AC Milan 1-0 in Wednesday's European Cup final, planned to buy either Zeljko Zivanovic or Mario Stanic or a top player from the English Premier League.

Yemen stun China

IRBID, Jordan, May 29: Yemen scored a shock 1-0 win over China in their World Cup Asian Zone qualifier on Friday to throw Group A wide open, reports Reuter.

Saleh bin-Seed Rabea's stunning long-range free-kick in the 61st minute meant that Iraq stayed top of the group. They hammered Pakistan 8-0 earlier on Friday and now lead Yemen on goal difference and pre-tournament favourites China by one point.

To add to their agony, China had key defender Dong Liqiang sent off on the hour, ruling him out of the vital match with Iraq on Sunday.

A sluggish China looked out-of-sorts in front of goal, although they twice saw shots cleared off the goal-line and came close on several other occasions.

China had all the odds in their favour after Yemen's inspirational goalkeeper and captain Ameen Ali al-Sontini went off injured after 14 minutes. But substitute Arif Abdel Rabu pulled off some fine saves to deny the Chinese.

In the final 10 minutes, China laid siege to the Yemeni goal with six players inside the penalty area but stout, and often unorthodox, defending kept their forwards at bay.

The result set up an exciting finale to the first round of Group A qualifiers in Jordan, with China and Iraq playing each other on Sunday.

Jordan and Pakistan will complete the tournament on Sunday night. The five teams will then go on to China for the second round of matches next month.

Iraq on a rampage

IRBID, Jordan, May 29: Iraq went on a goal-scoring spree to blitz Pakistan 8-0 in their World Cup Asian Zone Group A qualifier on Friday, reports Reuter.

Six Iraqi players shared in the one-sided goal feast against the hapless Pakistanis, who played with 10 men for the last 35 minutes after mid-fielder Zafar Iqbal was sent off for a second cautionable offence.

Leith Hussein opened the Iraqi account in the 13th minute and further goals from Saed Khais, Ala'a Kassem and captain Ahmed Radi had Iraqi comfortably ahead by halftime.

Iraq rested Radi and mid-fielder Ali Hussein in the second half, but continued to pepper the goal with shots as Pakistan never ventured out of their own half.



Imtiaz Ahmed Naqib pushes the ball home past a prostrate Abahani custodian Selim during the final of the DMFA Cup at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Naqib's goal settled the match. — Star photo

Fletcher at odds with Gooch over Stewart's role
England selectors in a fix



LONDON, May 29: England manager Keith Fletcher and skipper Graham Gooch are at odds over Alec Stewart's role in next week's first Ashes Test, reports AFP.

Stewart, the England vice-captain, is certain to play in the team to face Australia at Old Trafford on Thursday.

But the Surrey captain doesn't yet know if he will be playing as a specialist opener or as a wicket-keeper batsman going in lower down the order.

Gooch clearly prefers the first option, stating his preference after Australia's victory in the one-day series last week-end.

"Alec is likely to be a batsman only and open the innings in the first Test against Australia," he said.

But just a day later, manager Keith Fletcher insisted: "That's very much Graham's own opinion at this stage. It will one of the major topics for discussion."

Stewart has been handed so many roles in the last couple of years one half expects to see him given the new ball at Old Trafford on Thursday.

He's opened and kept wicket — and opened and not kept wicket. He's been a batsman-keeper at No 5 or 6 and a specialist middle order batsman.

The whole problem stems from England's failure to unearth a batting-bowling all-

rounder even half as good as Ian Botham. "Beefy" gave the team balance — and it's been tilting one way or the other ever since his powers began to decline.

There is nothing Gooch, Fletcher, Ted Dexter and Dennis Amis can do to turn back that particular clock when they meet on Sunday night.

But, given England's current plight — five consecutive Test drubbings as well as seven straight one-day losses — the selectors should make avoiding defeat at Old Trafford their first priority.

For that reason it seems sense to stick with Stewart as a middle-order batsman-keeper.



per until confidence is restored. That's hard on brilliant

glovemen like Jack Russell and, arguably the most talented of all, Colin Metson of Glamorgan. But England need to give themselves the best possible chance of scoring 400 in their first innings, something they have managed only once in the last 11 Tests.

With Gooch at no. 1 and Smith, Hick and Stewart at 3, 4 and 5, two top-order vacancies would be left. Surrey's Graham Thorpe showed enough promise during the Texaco matches to stay at no. 6, though Mark Ramprakash (Middlesex) and Nasser Hussain (Essex) are alternatives.

As for Gooch's opening partner, Mark Lathwell is the most exciting possibility, Somerset's 21-year-old added

Viv Richards to his growing fan club with a magical innings of 84 at Taunton this week — and the former West Indian captain has seen one or two decent players in his time.

Lancashire's Mike Atherton or Yorkshire captain Martyn Moxon would be easier selections, of course.

Of the bowlers, Chris Lewis, if free from a groin strain and Andrew Caddick look certain. As for the rest, it's very much a case of take your pick, though Kent's in-form Alan Igglesden should figure highly in the discussions — as will Essex spinner Peter Such.

Possible squad: Gooch, Lathwell, Smith, Hick, Stewart, Thorpe, Lewis, Salisbury, Jarvis, Caddick, Igglesden, Such, DeFreitas.

Viv irks friends, foes alike



LONDON, May 29: Former West Indies skipper Viv Richards angered both sides in Glamorgan's English County Championship match against Somerset on Friday, reports Reuter.

Richards, in his first match at Taunton since his former county controversially sacked him nearly seven years ago, upset the home side by refusing to walk when Nick Folland claimed a catch in the covers.

He then left his own team one short in the field by returning late from lunch.

Richards was on 42 when he sliced an attempted drive against Pakistani leg-spinner Mushtaq Ahmed and Folland, diving left and juggling frantically with the ball, claimed a catch.

At Gloucester, Worcestershire spinner Richard Illingworth enhanced his chances of a Test return by taking six championship wickets for the first time in his career.

The England one-day bowler, who has not played a Test for two years, took six for 28 in 18.4 overs as Gloucestershire were bowled out for 101. At the close Worcestershire led by 19 with nine wickets in hand.

England captain Graham Gooch's Test preparations with

the Essex second team were again ruined by Somerset's teenage seamer Andrew Payne.

Payne, who on Wednesday trapped the out-of-form Gooch lbw for 25, completed a memorable double when he dismissed him for only 23.

On threshold of futurity

ROME, May 29: The Italian authorities plan to use video evidence next season to judge disciplinary cases when there is the possibility of mistaken identity, soccer association president Antonio Matarrese said on Friday, reports Reuter.

The move follows an error last weekend which saw international defender Gigi de Agostini sent off for a foul committed by teammate Paolo Tramezzani.

The trio of officials in charge of the match admitted their error after seeing television pictures and Tramezzani was suspended by the game's disciplinary body.

Matarrese said he would propose the statutory use of television pictures in such cases in the future.

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Players of Mohammedan Sporting Club who retained the DMFA Cup beating arch-rivals Abahani Krira Chakra 3-2 in the final at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Mohammedans won the first DMFA Cup title in 1984 with Brothers Union. — Star photo

Fathers can be troublesome

PARIS, May 29: The father of French player Mary Pierce was ejected from the French Open after causing a disturbance during his daughter's match on Friday, tournament officials said, reports Reuter.

Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tour director Georgina Clark said Jim Pierce was thrown out by security officials because he was upsetting his daughter, the tournament's 12th seed, during her match with American Kimberley Po.

Pierce, who had earlier been warned, was escorted from the stadium and had his accreditation removed at the end of the first set. His 18-year-old daughter lost the first set but won the match 6-7, 6-3, 6-3.

"Mr Pierce was asked to leave the court because he was causing a disturbance in the crowd," Clark said. "He was interrupting the match and shouting out and disturbing Mary while she was playing."

But Clark denied suggestions that the player herself had asked for Pierce to be taken out.

Tournament director Patricia Clerc said a decision on whether Pierce's accreditation should be restored would be made once all the facts were available.

Pierce, who has had brushes with officialdom in the past, is an American who launched his daughter on the professional tour at the age of 14 and acted as her coach.

His wife Yannick is French and daughter Mary was born in Montreal, Canada.

Pierce told reporters outside the Roland Garros stadium he had only been urging his daughter to hit the ball harder.

Graf has to reach final to retain top slot

PARIS, May 29: Tennis association officials confirmed Friday that they had miscalculated the points system for their rankings and said that Graf will have to reach the French Open final to reclaim her number-one status, reports AFP.

"With the remaining players in the draw, Graf cannot earn enough bonus points (78) in reaching the semi-finals to overtake Monica Seles in the ranking," said a WTA official.

"Graf will have to reach the final to become number-one."

Since Tuesday the WTA had said that Graf needed to reach the semi-finals to overtake her great rival.

El Gohary Egypt's coach no more

CAIRO, May 29: Mahmoud el-Gohary, the tempestuous soccer coach who took Egypt to the 1990 World Cup, resigned Saturday, and the chairman of the soccer federation accepted, reports AP.

A former army colonel, el-Gohary has been Egypt's coach for five years. He became the toast of the nation by qualifying the team for the 1990 championships in Italy after a 54-year absence.

Since then, however, he has offered his resignation several times after embarrassing defeats. But officials of the Egyptian Football Federation rejected the resignations and asked him to stay.

Federation head Youssef el-Dahshoury said Saturday he accepted el-Gohary's resignation and would obtain final approval at a meeting on Tuesday.

El-Gohary was angered by the federation's decision to cancel a friendly match with Algeria. He also disagreed with its order that national team members pass up a tournament in South Korea next month to prepare for the World Military Soccer Championships.

The coach has lately been the butt of cartoons in government-owned newspapers questioning his large salary in light of the national team's generally poor performance.

This year's team missed qualifying for the 1994 World Cup in the United States by playing April 15 to a 0-0 draw with Zimbabwe in Lyon, France. The match was a replay of a 2-1 Egyptian victory in Cairo, nullified by unruly fan behavior.

First woman to chair IBF

BIRMINGHAM, England, May 29: Badminton's ruling body on Friday elected the first woman president in its 59-year history, reports Reuter.

China's Lu Shengrong takes over as head of the International Badminton Federation from Englishman Arthur Jones on August 1.

She said: "I am delighted with this appointment but a little overwhelmed by the trust that has been placed in me to preside over an expanding Olympic sport."

Top two keep the show alive



PARIS, May 29: The way the seeds are falling, it may be premature to look ahead to the French Open final.

But the prospect of a Pete Sampras-Jim Courier showdown is too tempting to resist, reports AP.

The world's No 1 and No 2 players staged a thriller in Hong Kong in their only meeting this year, won by Sampras, 6-3, 6-7, 7-6. Here, Courier's status as two-time defending champion makes him the favourite, despite his No 2 seeding.

"If Sampras and Courier are both in the finals, you'll probably see the best tennis match ever," said Jeff Tarango, who

the draw is No 9 Michael Stich of Germany.

Ivanisevic not only lost 2-6, 6-2, 7-5, 6-3 to unseeded Carlos Costa of Spain, but faced a possible fine for spitting in the direction of a linesman.

Among the women, the top 10 seeds have survived.

No 5 Mary-Joe Fernandez, the first in action Saturday, beat fellow Floridian Kathy Rinaldi, 6-2, 6-2, in 73 minutes on centre court to advance to the fourth round. The two have played only three times in nine years together on the tour, with Fernandez winning all three.

No 2 Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and No 3 Gabriela Sabatini had third-round matches later Saturday. No 1 Steffi

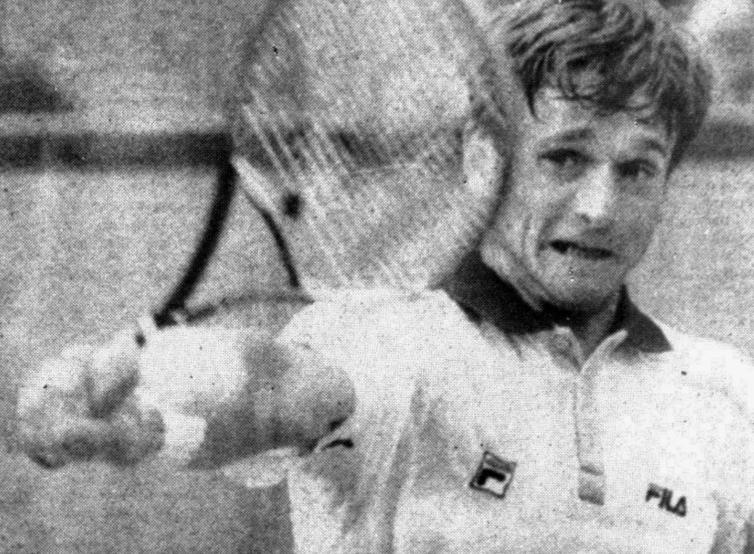
Edberg's fellow Swede, Jonas Svensson, a 6-3, 6-7 (2-7), 5-7, 6-3, 6-4 winner Friday over Spaniard Javier Sanchez.

"If I was to pick a long shot, I would pick Pete. You can still get some pretty good odds," Tarango said, alluding to the perception Sampras is shaky on clay.

Courier agreed that Sampras is playing well, and refused to assess his own chances of winning a third straight title.

"I don't ever think about it until I am in the final," Courier said. "I don't look past the next match, because there's no reason to... can't play two matches together."

He was willing to look ahead to his fourth-round match with



Spaniard Carlos Costa hits a backhand return during his third round match against Croatian Goran Ivanisevic in the French Open at Roland Garros on Friday. Costa stunned hard-serving Croat 2-6, 6-2, 7-5, 7-3. — AFP photo

got a close-up look at Courier in a third-round match Friday. Courier won 6-1, 6-7 (2-7), 6-3, 7-5.

"Pete really wants to just win all he can right now, he's really excited and playing great," Tarango said. "They don't have really any holes. It's just going to be a great match."

Third-seeded Stefan Edberg also has been playing well, and poses a potential semifinal roadblock for Sampras. But seeds 4 through 8 — Boris Becker, Goran Ivanisevic, Petr Korda, Ivan Lendl and Michael Chang — are gone, and the top player left in Courier's half of

Graf, No 4 Conchita Martinez and No 6 Jennifer Capriati were among those advancing Friday to the fourth round.

Graf took Laura Gildemeister of Peru 6-2, 6-2, Martinez downed Natalia Baudone of Italy 6-0, 7-5, and Capriati downed Florentina Labat of Argentina 6-0, 3-6, 6-4.

Courier had Saturday off before a fourth-round match Sunday with the man he calls "Blade Runner," 15th-seeded Thomas Muster of Austria.

Edberg played his third-round match Saturday against American Jonathan Stark, ranked 59th in the world. Sampras

Muster, a pairing of two of the game's hardest hitters. Muster beat Brad Gilbert 7-5, 6-2, 6-4 Friday.

"Playing the Blade Runner is like playing in the mirror," Courier said. "It will be a tough match."

Sampras is trying not to let his status as No 1 affect him.

"Being No 1 was important to me, and I did put a lot of pressure on myself to finally achieve it," he said. "It was definitely kind of a dream... it feels good to be in the top of your profession."

Stich beat Richard Fromberg of Australia 6-4, 6-4, 6-4 Friday in the third round.

Majoli — a carbon copy of Seles



PARIS, May 29: Teenage tennis starlet, born in what used to be Yugoslavia, coached by her father and brother, now based in Florida — Iva Majoli bears an uncommon resemblance to Monica Seles, reports Reuter.

The powerful double-fisted backhand, bleached hair, slightly pinched features and distinct grunt must all have Seles wondering whether to sue for breach of copyright.

And, like Seles, 15-year-old Croat Majoli is a product of the Nick Bollettieri Academy in Florida.

But while Seles languishes at home after the stabbing horror of Hamburg last month, Majoli is basking in the limelight of reaching the last 16 at the French Open.

Majoli admits, however, that she cannot ignore the comparisons with Serbian-born Seles.

"Many people said when I came to Florida... that I looked like her, played like her," she said.

"I didn't mind because she's number one and a great player. But I think it's better if you are your own player, not someone else, even if the other person is the best. We don't see each other much but we do say 'Hi' when we do."

Majoli, dubbed "Little Eva" despite being a strapping 1.74 metres tall, says her inspiration has been Martina Navratilova.

"She's unbelievable. I think she's the greatest," said Majoli, pronounced Myoley.

The Croat downed German 15th seed Sabine Hack on Friday to go through to a fourth round clash with top seed Steffi Graf.

"Steffi's great athlete but Martina is the one I really like," she said.

Majoli has been in fine form in her last two matches, starting with a 6-0, 6-1 victory over American Louise Allen.

Her 6-0, 7-6 win against Hack preserved her record of not having dropped a set.

The second service ace she produced when facing a set point against her was even

more revealing about her confidence.

Even Seles would be impressed at the gusto with which Majoli strikes every ball but watching her is scarcely a peaceful experience.

The explosion of air and emotion on each shot can make a passing plane sound irrelevant.

Her father Stanko, a former taxi driver in Zagreb, moved his family from Croatia to Florida three years ago.

Since then his daughter has found herself rubbing shoulders with fellow Bollettieri products such as Seles and Andre Agassi.

"When I have time I go to school," Majoli said. "But I still have time for my friends. I think I lead a normal life."

Those who wonder if winning 75,000 in prize money before your 16th birthday encourages a normal personality should be comforted by her modesty.

"It feels great to be in the fourth round and I'm looking forward to playing well against Steffi. We'll see what happens," Majoli said.

ROK in Sudirman Cup final



BIRMINGHAM, May 29: Holders South Korea beat battling Denmark 3-2 in a five-hour marathon on Friday to reach the final of the Sudirman Cup badminton mixed team event for the third time in succession, reports Reuter.

Victory was clinched shortly after midnight when world and Olympic doubles champions Park Joo-Bong and Kim Moon-Soo beat the Danish men's pair of Thomas Lund and Jon Holst-Christensen 18-16, 15-10 in a high-quality display.

The South Koreans owed much to Park, who had come out of retirement to help his country retain the prestigious trophy.

Although beaten in the first game when he partnered Gil Young-Ah in the mixed doubles, he produced his best form at the end of the evening when the stakes were at their highest.

Denmark might have been able to clinch the tie if Pernille Nedergaard had capitalised on a 9-6 lead in the third game of

her women's singles against Le Heung-Soo.

But she let it slip, losing 11-5, 3-11, 9-12 and although Thomas Stuer-Lauridsen, a world champion in the making, made it 2-1 for the Danes, the Koreans, traditionally powerful in the doubles, held the edge.

Women's pairing Chung So-Young and Gil levelled the tie at 2-2 on their seventh match point against Lotte Olsen and Lisbet Stuer-Lauridsen.

That left Park and Kim, easily the best doubles pair over the last decade, to seal

Suprianto out of danger

BIRMINGHAM, England, May 29: A typhoid scare at the world badminton championships ended on Friday when a second set of tests on leading Indonesian doubles player Bambang Suprianto proved negative, reports Reuter.

Confirmation of the results came in a letter from the city's health chief, Doctor Alan Turner, to Indonesian team manager Leo Wiranata.

the rubber.

In Sunday's final South Korea play either Indonesia or China who meet in the second semifinal today.

Meanwhile, an AP report said: The United States team registered its first victory of the week Friday to avoid relegation and retain its place in Group Six of the Sudirman Cup competition at the World Badminton Championships.

With their 3-2 win over Ireland, the United States finished in third place in the four-team group with one win and two losses. Winless Ireland finished last and will be demoted to Group Seven at the next championships.

The US team had its victory in hand after the first three matches against the Irish.

Chong Weng Kai and Linda French won the mixed doubles 15-10, 17-16 against Graham Henderson and Ann Stephens. Eric von Heiland made it 2-0 by defeating Sonya McGinn 11-4, 11-6 in the women's singles.

Kevin