

England seek a fresh start

LONDON, Aug 4: England's cricketers will attempt to make a fresh start under new captain Michael Atherton at Edgbaston on Thursday with two 40-year-olds sitting in their dressing-room, reports Reuter.

Australia may hold an unbeatable 3-0 lead with two Tests to play in a one-sided Ashes series, but England's selectors still seem convinced experience is the best option with a Caribbean tour looming early in 1994.

Apart from Graham Gooch, replaced as captain by Atherton last week, the Australians will find veteran off-spinner John Emburey amongst the fifth Test opposition as they seek to emulate their 4-0 margin of 1989.

Emburey was drafted in, following much selectorial debate, after it was discovered the Edgbaston pitch was likely to prove much more friendly to spin than seam this weekend.

England manager Keith Fletcher revealed it had taken him "just 10 seconds" of looking at the Test strip to realise the home side's strategy had to be reassessed.

The unflappable Emburey, dropped seemingly for good after the winter tour of India and Sri Lanka, was finally picked ahead of Middlesex teammate Phil Tufnell and leg-spinner Ian Salisbury, but Fletcher denied the choice was a backward step.

"We decided that, at the moment, we just wanted the best team to win a Test match. Phil Tufnell is not bowling as well as the two off-spinners at the moment," argued Fletcher. Salisbury is still not fully match fit after a shoulder injury.

"It's perfectly good pitch but it is dry and will turn," Fletcher added. "After two and a half days it will turn more." It represents a major bonus for Emburey, who seems certain to win his 63rd cap. He was se-

lected for just one Test in India taking two for 144 in Bombay and his 144 Test wickets have cost over 37 apace.

His form for Middlesex has been good lately — he took career-best figures of eight for 40 last week — but his selection has reopened the debate about the future of English cricket.

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But with most of his seam attack on the treatment table, manager Bobby Simpson is still ruling out a late call-up for fast bowlers Mike Whitney and Jo Angel, both in England despite not making the original squad.

"To try and call someone in for a Test match is very difficult because you've no idea how they might go," said Simpson. "They haven't played five-day cricket or done anything substantial."

With West Indies tour places up for grabs, the England side will be eager to exploit any weakness they can find, but their opponents show no sign of easing up.

David Boon, Michael Slater and the Waugh twins fill the top four places in the national batting averages, and Boon is averaging just over 96 every time he walks to the crease in first-class cricket.

Skipper Allan Border is also reconsidering his likely exit from the Test side next year.

"I now think that if I'm still making the grade in terms of fitness, then I'd want to think about staying on as a player," he told a British newspaper this week.

"But it would only be if I were making heaps of runs. I would hate to retire as captain then decide to play and not get picked in the side. That would be shattering."

TEAMS
ENGLAND: Michael Atherton, Graham Gooch, Robin Smith, Matthew Maynard, Alec Stewart (or Jack Russell), Nasser Hussain, Graham Thorpe, Martin Bicknell, Mark Ilett, John Emburey, Devon Malcolm, Steve Watkins, Peter Such.

AUSTRALIA: Michael Slater, Mark Taylor, David Boon, Mark Waugh, Allan Boarder, Steve Waugh, Ian Healy, Merv Hughes, Paul Reiffel, Shane Warne, Tim May, Wayne Holdsworth, Brendon Julian.

Dizziness disturbs Graf

CARLSBAD, Calif., Aug 4: World number one Steffi Graf overcame a bout of dizziness to defeat French woman Karine Quentrec 6-3, 6-2 on Tuesday night in a second-round match at the 375,000 Mazda Tennis Classic, reports Reuter.

The top-seeded Graf, 24, ATP top 20

MONTE CARLO, Aug 4: Leading money winners in men's tennis as released by the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) on Monday, reports Reuter.

1. Jim Courier (US) 1,508,936 Dollars
2. Pete Sampras (US) 1,362,275
3. Sergi Bruguera (Spain) 1,205,654
4. Michael Stich (Germany) 1,189,251
5. Stefan Edberg (Sweden) 755,169
6. Andrei Medvedev (Ukraine) 594,713
7. Richard Krajceck (Netherlands) 588,763
8. Boris Becker (Germany) 579,329
9. Karel Novacek (Czech Republic) 552,236
10. Michael Chang (US) 542,429
11. Petr Korda (Czech Republic) 530,719
12. Thomas Muster (Austria) 471,686
13. Wally Masur (Australia) 466,404
14. Todd Martin (US) 441,308
15. Wayne Ferreira (South Africa) 433,871
16. Richey Reneberg (US) 426,818
17. Magnus Gustafsson (Sweden) 394,000
18. Mark Woodforde (Australia) 378,262
19. Carlos Costa (Spain) 371,098
20. Cedric Pioline (France) 353,514

bothered recently by nagging foot and shoulder ailments, has a new problem.

"It's a blocked jaw and I'm not feeling 100 percent at the moment," said Graf, who withdrew from the doubles competition with Australian partner Rennae Stubbs.

"I've had something weird happen called a blocked jaw and that's caused headaches and dizziness a few times," said Graf, who won back-to-back singles titles at this event in 1988 and 1989.

The 24-year-old said it all began about a week ago on a flight from her German home in Bruchl to her other residence in Delray Beach, Florida.

The German star admitted she had never suffered anything like this before.

"Thinking it was nothing more than a toothache, she headed straight for the dentist's office after the headaches began."

He said it was a blocked jaw and there was nothing she could do but take pain-killers, said the reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion.

"Then I went to a throat nose and ear doctor and he also said it's a blocked jaw," Graf said. "Actually it's been all right for the last few days but it started again today."

Graf plans to use her off-day on Wednesday for a light practice session, hoping she can fully recover.

"I don't think it's anything major," said Graf. Graf said the rash of recent injuries forced her to take some time off and that felt great.

But the newest ailment has her frustrated again. "I had been able to practice real hard. This weekend I felt OK. For the past week my shoulder felt great."

Although Graf won in 58 minutes, she wasn't pleased with her game against the world's 86th-ranked player.

"I didn't return very well. I had a lot of unforced errors and

other times I hit the ball much too late."

In other second-round results, fifth-seeded Magdalena Maleeva of Bulgaria routed Rosana de Los Rios of Paraguay 6-1, 6-0 in 43 minutes but 17-year-old Elena Likhovtseva of Kazakhstan surprised eighth seed Nathalie Tauziat of France 1-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2.

Tauziat, ranked 15th in the world, easily captured the opening set before the teen-aged baseliner got untracked and levelled the match.

In the deciding set, Likhovtseva jumped to a 3-1 lead before Tauziat held for 3-2, but Likhovtseva ran off the final three games for the one hour, 57 minute victory.

"It's the biggest win of my career," said Likhovtseva, ranked 244th in the world. "It was a tough match and I had to fight hard to win. It wasn't easy."

Second seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario and third seed Conchita Martinez, both of Spain, and two-time defending champion Jennifer Capriati of the United States, seeded fourth, open with second-round matches on Wednesday after receiving first-round byes.

Magic set for another comeback
LOS ANGELES, Aug 4: Magic Johnson is set for another comeback to big time basketball—but he is unlikely to make a full-time return to the sport, reports AFP.

Johnson, who has been diagnosed as having the HIV virus which causes AIDS, is considering rejoining the Los Angeles Lakers in the National Basketball Association for the second half of a season.

General manager Jerry West said a request "would be given serious consideration."

Johnson first faces a European exhibition tour with an all-star team.

"The standard of play is weak in comparison to the other countries and the introduction of import players can only do so much," he said.

The league, due to start in December, is being launched by a Perth-based group with backing from Basketball Australia the sport's controlling body in Australia.

"The idea of an Asian league is such a good one — its time has come," Marshall said. "We are looking for the final sixth team to sign up in the next week or two."

But he said the league planned to go ahead under another format even if both Taiwan and Bangkok pulled out.

"We could invite a third Australian team to join or play the competition with just five teams," he said.

The franchise owners are scheduled to meet in Singapore or Kuala Lumpur on September 30.

"We aim to have sponsorship and television rights finalised by then," Marshall said.

Russell recalled as a standby

BIRMINGHAM, England, Aug 4: England called up wicket-keeper Jack Russell on Wednesday as standby for the injured Alec Stewart in the fifth Test against Australia starting on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Stewart has a rib injury after rolling on a ball in the field at the weekend.

"Alec has had an X-ray and there is no break. He has got bruising and the problem seems to have got worse," England captain Mike Atherton said.

"We're still hoping he will be able to play, but Jack has been called here as cover just in case."

England go into the fifth Test at Edgbaston 3-0 down in the six-Test series.

Business as usual for Sampras
LOS ANGELES, Aug 4: Top seed and world number one Pete Sampras had an easy time beating Andrew Sznajder of Canada 6-1, 6-2 in the first round of the 300,000 Volvo Tennis Classic on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Second-seeded Michael Stich of Germany belted 11 aces en route to beating Mikael Pernfors of Sweden 6-2, 6-4 in 67 minutes in the first round of the 32-player hard court tournament which serves as a warm-up to the US Open.

Unseeded Aaron Krickstein craved bad memories of a years ago here, when he broke his left foot in the semifinals, as he upset sixth-seeded Wayne Ferreira of South Africa 4-6, 6-0, 6-3 in one hour, 43 minute first-round match.

Fourth seed and defending champion Richard Krajceck of the Netherlands relied on his powerful first serve to win the crucial points in the first set tie-break and defeat Italian Gianluca Pozzi 7-6 (7-2), 6-3 in his first-round match.

Fifth-seeded Alexander Volkov of Russia beat American Brian MacPhie 6-2, 6-3 and eighth-seeded American Brad Gilbert overcame Luiz Mattar of Brazil 3-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-2 in other first-round matches.

Sampras, the reigning Wimbledon champion, never dropped his serve against the 156th-ranked Sznajder and controlled his opponent's service game by rallying patiently from the baseline and waiting for an opening to attack the net.

Sampras is using the next three tournaments to prepare for his attempt to win his second US Open title beginning at the end of the month.

"I felt like I lost strength at Wimbledon and I worked to get that back before coming to these tournaments. My focus is to get back in the habit of winning matches."

"I'm really looking forward to the next few weeks in the hard court season, and I don't feel at all flat after Wimbledon," Sampras said.

Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion, displayed his powerful serve-and-volley game against the 37th-ranked Pernfors, who has climbed out of the mid-200's in the ranking after being sidelined with Achilles' tendon surgery.

Bangkok, Taiwan in a deadlock
SYDNEY, Aug 4: Taiwan and Bangkok are locked in a battle to win the final spot in a proposed six-team Asian basketball league, organisers said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

Five cities — Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Perth and Cairns — have already committed themselves to the competition, said Alan Marshall, a partner in the Australian Consortium backing the league.

"In terms of organisation and playing standards, the Taiwan franchise is ahead in the race," he said.

Marshall said the Bangkok bid suffered because of a lack of playing talent in Thailand, where basketball enjoys only minority status.

"The standard of play is weak in comparison to the other countries and the introduction of import players can only do so much," he said.

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Guttler, Van Almsick steal show

SHEFFIELD, Aug 4: Karoly Guttler shattered a world record and German teenage prodigy Franziska van Almsick scooped two golds at the European Swimming Championships on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Guttler grabbed first the world record and then the 100 metres breaststroke title which had belonged to his fellow Hungarian Norbert Rozsa, who is now half a world away in Australia.

She concluded the day in style with a second gold in the 4x200 metres freestyle relay and the prospect of seven golds in six days of swimming a distinct possibility.

Hungary's Krisztina Egervari, winner of three golds at both the Olympics and the last European Championships, turned the opposition into an irrelevance in her majestic defence of the 400 metres individual medley title.

But fellow Olympic champion Evgeny Sadovyi was upstaged by 19-year-old Finn

and brought the championships to dramatic life after five low-key days of diving, synchronised swimming and water polo.

The 25-year-old Hungarian, denied the 1988 Olympic title by Britain's Adrian Moorhouse by just one hundredth of a second, pounded out a world mark of one minute 00.95 seconds to banish any lingering sleep from the spectators' eyes.

He repeated the savage treatment of his rivals in the final, narrowly missing another world mark but still thrusting home almost a second faster

than British silver medalist Nick Gillingham in 1:01.04.

Guttler, who failed to make last year's Olympic 100 metres final and finished fifth in the 200, took six months off after Barcelona and returned refreshed in January.

"I didn't think I'd do a good time. I've been lucky," said Guttler. The Hungarian federation had optimistically entered Rozsa's name for Sheffield but the world champion preferred to stay in Australia where he has been granted permanent resi-

dent status.

Van Almsick and Egervari, Europe's outstanding women swimmers, were in a class of their own and dominated their races.

Van Almsick forged away in the 100 metres freestyle and won by a vast gulf of 1.4 seconds in 54.57—0.16 of a second inside the 1986 European mark of fellow former East German Kristin Otto and just 0.09 outside the 1992 world mark of American Jenny Thompson.

"This win is special. It is my first major title," the 15-year-old Berliner said. "I didn't expect to be so quick in the 100. It was very hard for me. It's been luck."

Kerstin Kielgass, who shred Germany's relay win with Van Almsick, said: "Franziska is a rare talent, the sort born once every 10 years."

Martina Moravcova, 17, gave Slovakia an unexpected silver by taking second place in the 100 behind Van Almsick and ahead of defending champion Catherine Plewinski of France.

Egervari triumphantly negotiated the first leg of a challenge for four golds by retaining her 400 metres individual medley title with consummate ease.

She led all the way and was never threatened, winning by more than five seconds from Russian Daria Shmeleva.

Nineteen-year-old Kasvic, double European junior champion in 1990, grabbed the 200 freestyle gold in a thrilling battle with Sadovyi and Swedish veteran Anders Holmertz, the 1987 gold medalist.

Holmertz set the pace for the first 100 but Kasvic hurtled through in the second 100 to relegate Sadovyi and Holmertz—the two men who beat him in the Olympic final — to second and third with just over half a second separating the three.

MEDALS TABLE
Medals table at the European Swimming Championships on Tuesday (tabulate under gold, silver, bronze):

| | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|
| Germany | 6 | 1 | 2 |
| Russia | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Hungary | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Finland | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| France | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Sweden | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Britain | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Slovakia | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Czech Republic | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Italy | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Ukraine | 0 | 0 | 1 |



German teenage prodigy Franziska van Almsick on her way to winning the gold medal in the women's 200m freestyle at the European Championships in Sheffield on August 3.

"I was happy to break this record and surprised," Guttler said after slicing 0.34 of a second from the absent Rozsa's 1991 world mark in the morning's heats and very nearly matching it in the final.

Van Almsick, who burst into the limelight at 14 by winning four medals at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, came tantalisingly close to breaking the women's 100 metres freestyle world record but had to settle for a European mark and her first senior championship gold.

Antti Kasvio, who adopted the shaven-headed style the Russian sported the Barcelona Games and surged away with the gold in the 200 metres freestyle.

Brita Baldus recaptured the women's three-metres springboard diving crown she had won 10 years earlier in Rome to make it four diving titles in four days for Germany, who now lead the medals table with six golds.

Guttler's world record provided a sizzling start to the day

than British silver medalist Nick Gillingham in 1:01.04.

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