

Shri Lankan Hashan Tilakaratne jumps in the air after South African opening batsman Andrew Hudson's scorching cut off Piyal Wijetunga (not in the picture) went his way on the second day of the first Test Moratuwa. The other man in the picture is Lankan keeper Pubudu Dassanayake. — AFP photo

SA count on Wessels, Hudson

COLOMBO, Aug 27: South Africa are banking on skipper Kepler Wessels and Andrew Hudson for a long innings in a bid to secure an advantage over Sri Lanka when the first Test resumes in suburban Moratuwa on Saturday, reports AFP.

Wessels and Hudson put on 81 in 42 overs without separating at the end of the second day Thursday and the pair will be hoping to extend their stay when play resumes at the Tyronne Fernando Stadium after today's rest day.

"We are very happy that Kepler and Hudson plugged themselves... we like to try to bat on and get a big score. We would like to put pressure on Sri Lanka in their second innings," South African coach Mike Procter said.

Procter commended pace bowlers Allan Donald and Brett Schultz who took nine wickets between them to end Sri Lanka's first innings at 331. Left-hander Schultz celebrated his 23rd birthday Thursday with a career best 4-75.

"Donald and Schultz bowled exceptionally well. They showed a lot of guts on that wicket," said Procter referring to the slow track and added that on hindsight he believed South Africa should have gone in with an extra seamer.

The pitch offered little to the spinners of either side with South Africa's off-spinner Pat Symcox giving away 100 runs without a wicket on his Test debut.

Shri Lankan skipper Arjuna Ranatunga said he was satisfied with 331 but expressed disappointment at a dropped catch that let Hudson off the hook and the inability of his three specialist spinners to achieve a breakthrough.

"We have to be satisfied with 331. Originally we thought we should get to about 400 runs. But that is how the game goes... we have to bowl better for a breakthrough," said Ranatunga.

The right-handed Hudson who is 39 not out was lucky to survive after the usually safe Roshan Mahanama dropped an easy catch at second slip off seamer Promodya Wickramasinghe.

IOC chief pays homage to late Petrovic

ZAGREB, Croatia, Aug 27: IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch paid his respects at the graveside of basketball star Drazen Petrovic Thursday while on a visit to meet members of the Croatian Olympic Committee, reports AP.

Petrovic, who played for NBA team New Jersey Nets, was killed in an automobile accident June 7 in Germany. His grave is at the Central Zagreb Cemetery.

While in Zagreb, the IOC president was asked to comment on the controversy over payments to track competitors at major events. He said prize-money would not be on offer at the Olympics.

Some star athletes demanded prize-money to go along with gold medals at the World Championships, which have just finished in Stuttgart, Germany.

Track's world governing body, the International Amateur Athletic Federation, has refused to introduce prize-money and gold medalists each received a Mercedes car instead from the sponsors.

"We understand that the athletes are asking for some money compensation," he said. "But we would like to keep our tradition that taking part at the Olympic Games is really an honour for athletes to defend their country at the most important event in the world."

Ilott's riposte for selectors



LONDON, Aug 27: England pace reed Mark Ilott fired a perfect reply to the selectors on Thursday by jolting championship-chasing Middlesex, reports AFP.

The Essex left-arter, left out of the final Test against Australia, responded with six for 42 to dismiss Mike Gatting's title favourites for 167.

Middlesex had been cock-a-hoop after dismissing Essex for just 148, with Angus Fraser, fresh from a triumphant Test return at the Oval, conceding just 19 runs from 16 overs while picking up four wickets.

Second-placed Glamorgan, who trail Middlesex by 58 points, had a better day against Gloucestershire.

The Welsh county raced to 208 runs before lunch, thanks to a third-wicket stand of 187 in 32 overs between England batsman Matthew Maynard (93) and ex-West Indies star Viv Richards (95).

They then fell away to 292 all out, only to have Gloucestershire reeling at 84 for seven by stumps, with former England opener Chris Broad standing firm on 52 not out.

Third-placed Surrey were frustrated by a fighting 63 from Somerset's Ian Fletcher, who helped the visitors reach 275 for nine.

Cairns flies home back

NOTTINGHAM, England, Aug 27: Chris Cairns, Nottinghamshire's New Zealand all-rounder, has flown home following a family tragedy, reports AFP.

His 19-year-old sister Rachel was killed in a train-crash earlier this week and it is uncertain whether Cairns will return to Trent Bridge for the remainder of the English season.

Italian racers lose their bikes

OSLO, Aug 27: Two of the bicycles used by the Italian team to win the World Championship team trial race this week were stolen from a hotel garage Friday, reports AP.

The Norwegian news agency NTB said frames from the two bicycles, which had been dismantled, and two training bikes were taken from a storage room in the garage of Oslo's Holmenkollen Park Hotel, where the team was staying.

The theft will not hurt the team when World Championship races resume Saturday because riders had planned to use different bicycles, said the report.

NTB said the two racing frames, worth about 100,000 kroner (dfls 13,600), had been used by Gianfranco Contini and Rosario Fina in their gold-medal ride as part of the Italian time trial foursome on Wednesday.

The American beat Mizabi Valiev (Ukraine) 2-0 in the final after beating Georgia's Zaza Turmanidze in the semifinals. Turmanidze then lost to Andrei Choumlin in the bronze medal match.

The gold in the 82-kg class went to Sebahattin Ozgurk (Turkey) who outpointed Saitur Katinivasov of Russia, 3-2.

fourth spot, had no such problems. Nigel Felton hitting his second championship century of the season to underpin a solid batting display against Leicestershire.

Felton's 105 off 219 balls with 15 fours guided the home side to 335 for six from 110 overs. He shared a second-wicket stand of 111 with Rob Bailey (59), who became the first Northant batsman to pass

cracked a career-best 180 with 27 boundaries, while Dessaur reached his maiden championship ton with 10 fours to steer Notts to 320 for three.

Craig White also scored his maiden first-class century as Yorkshire totalled 326 for four against Durham.

The 23-year-old — born in England, but brought up in Australia — hammered a six and 12 fours to register his ton from 180 balls.

He shared in a fourth-wicket stand of 72 with Richard Blakey and then joined with Peter Hartley in an unbroken stand of 116.

Mark Ealham and Steve Marsh made their highest scores of the season to rescue Kent from the clutches of Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram. Ealham (85) and Marsh (63) led Kent from 116 for six to 263 all out with a century stand.

Akram finished with five for 69 before Lancashire lost Gehan Mendis in replying with 38 for one.

Chris Tolley and Phil Newport took three wickets each as Worcestershire maintained their late challenge for prize money by digging out Warwickshire for 206. The home side were 31 without loss in reply.

County Championship summaries: Colchester: Essex 148, Middlesex 167 (MC Ilott 6-42). Abergavenny: Glamorgan 292 (IVA Richards 95, MP Maynard 93). Gloucestershire 84-7 (BC Broad 52 not out). Portsmouth: Sussex 375-4 (DM Smith 142 not out, MP Speight 121) v Hampshire.

Lytham: Kent 263 (MA Ealham 85, S A Marsh 63; Wasim Akram 5-9). Lancashire 38-1.

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Ever prime Bradman

ADELAIDE, Australia, Aug 27: One of the world's great cricketers Sir Donald Bradman remains in public demand despite reaching the age of 85 here today, reports AFP.

Adelaide-based Sir Donald, who scored 6,996 runs at an average of 99.94 with 29 centuries in his 52 Test career for Australia between 1928 and 1948, still receives hundreds of letters each year from around the world.

"Barely a day goes by without mail arriving from overseas, inter-state and locally addressed to Sir Donald," South Australian Cricket Association (SACA) executive manager Barry Gibbs said today.

"And I know he's very meticulous about responding to the correspondence he receives. As his age is increasing, there certainly is no sign of any drop-off in the amount of correspondence and personal inquiries seeking information about and from the greatest cricketer the world has seen."

Sir Donald regularly visits the offices of the SACA at Adelaide Oval to autograph a huge number of bats, books and copies of the Bradman albums, the record of his career released in 1987.

International cricket administrators also seek the opinions of the former Australian captain and cricket board chairman, who had been one of the game's most influential figures.

Gibbs said Sir Donald remained in good health despite his age and that he continued to get among the medals during his regular rounds of golf at Adelaide's Kooyonga course.

Sir Donald intended having a quiet celebration at home today with his wife of 61 years, Lady Jessie, Gibbs said.

Although prepared to correspond to cricket fans and autograph various items, Sir Donald still prefers to stay well out of the media spotlight.

Good news for tennis fans

BEIJING, Aug 27: For the few tennis fans, they will no longer have to stick to their TV sets for a view of tennis professionals in action, reports Xinhua.

In October, big names such as Michael Chang and Brad Gilbert will lead a rack of some 60 tennis pros to compete in the first professional tennis tournament ever held in China.

These pros will compete in singles and doubles events which combine to offer 300,000 US dollars as prize money.

The Salem Beijing Open will be one of the 87 stops on this year's Association of Tennis Professionals circuit which are scattered in 34 countries and regions in six continents.

Xia Jiaping and Pan Bing will represent hosts China to go directly into the competition proper while two more Chinese players will go through qualification ties to get their berths in the 32-player singles contest.

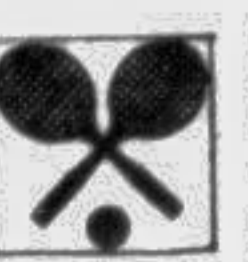
Harding fight set for Oct 16

SYDNEY, Aug 27: Jeff Harding of Australia will defend his World Boxing Council light-heavyweight title against Crawford Ashley of Britain on Oct 16, Harding's trainer said Friday, reports AP.

The contest was originally scheduled for Sept 18 at Crawley in England, but has been put back a month because of television requirements, trainer Manny Hinton said.

The venue remains unchanged, he said.

Courier draws easy passage



NEW YORK, Aug 27: The luck of the draw was with world number one Jim Courier on Thursday, reports Reuter.

The draw for the US Open tennis championships was held on Thursday and the ceremony left the top seed in the easier half of the men's competition with a smooth road to the quarter-finals, save for a potentially dangerous third-round bump.

Courier, who reached the final of all three Grand Slams this year, winning the Australian Open, drew 116th-ranked Spaniard Marcos Aurelio Gorri as his first-round opponent for the Open, which begins on Monday.

The American, who regained the top ranking this week after winning the US Hardcourts in Indianapolis, will face a qualifier in the second round before possible being tested by 28th-ranked compatriot Malivai Washington in the third.

Courier is slotted to face 15th-seeded Frenchman Cedric Pioline in the round of 16, unless former champion Mats Wilander, a wildcard entry attempting a comeback, manages to get that far. Neither should pose a threat.

His likely quarter-final opponent will be either 10th-seeded Dutchman Richard Krajcek or eighth seed Andrei Medvedev of Ukraine.

In sharp contrast, second-seeded Wimbledon champion

Pete Sampras will almost surely have 16th-seed Andre Agassi awaiting him in the round of 16.

None of the other top contenders will come face to face so early.

Sampras, last year's runner-up, opens against 56th-ranked Frenchman Fabrice Santoro, but found himself in the half of the draw stacked with Agassi, the always dangerous Michael Chang, defending champion Stefan Edberg and former Wimbledon winner Michael

round date with struggling three-time champion Ivan Lendl.

Huge-serving Croatian Groan Ivanisevic, the 11th seed, appears to be the biggest obstacle in the way of a semifinal showdown between Becker and Courier.

Fifth-seeded French Open champion Sergi Bruguera is in the same quarter as Becker and Ivanisevic, but with his lack of hard-core expertise, he could well fall to fellow-Spaniard Javier Sanchez in the first round.

Women's top seed Steffi Graf, the heavy favorite with Monica Seles still out of action, drew American Robin White as her first-round opponent, while second seed and 1992 runner-up Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario opens against Florenca Labatt of Argentina.

If form holds the most compelling women's quarter-finals pit Graf against fifth seed Gabriela Sabatini in a rematch of the 1988 and 1990 finals; and 36-year old four time winner Martina Navratilova against seventh seed Jerrifer Capriati, looking for her first Grand Slam title at 17.

Sanchez, in the same half of the draw as Capriati and Navratilova, is slotted to meet sixth-seeded American Mary Joe Fernandez in the quarters.

Wimbledon runner-up Jana Novotna and fourth-seeded Spaniard Conchita Martinez are potential quarter-final opponents in Graf's half of the draw.

Pioline sends Stich packing



COMMACK, New York, Aug 27: Unseeded Frenchman Cedric Pioline upset fourth-seeded Michael Stich of Germany 6-7 (5-7), 6-4, 7-6 (8-6) on Thursday in a second-round match at the 300,000 Waldbaum Hamlet Cup, reports Reuter.

Stich, ranked fourth in the world, was unable to convert 17 of 18 break points he held against Pioline's service in the three hour, seven minute match.

"I played well until I reached break point against him, then I played stupid," said Stich, who has yet to win a hardcourt tournament this year. "I'm very frustrated."

Pioline, ranked 15th, a seeding he'll have at next week's US Open, said "I had too many break points against me. I just took them one at a time and kept getting confident."

"It was very close and came down to who would win two points in the last tiebreaker and I won them."

Stich's only successful service break earned him the opening game of the match. Pioline, unleashing good service returns, broke in the 10th game, but Stich won the tiebreaker.

"I took a few chances and played with confidence," said Pioline, who has never won an ATP tournament.

He broke Stich at love in the seventh game of the second set and rallied from 0-40 in the eighth game of the third set as Stich misfired three times.

In the tie-breaker for the match, Pioline got his second match point with a winning service return and won when Stich return service long.

Seventh-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia was the lone seed to advance, reaching the quarter-finals during the afternoon programme under an unrelenting sun.

Ivanisevic, 11th in the rankings, produced 13 aces, 11 in the second set, as he whipped Germany's 51st-ranked Carl-Uwe Steeb 6-2, 6-1 in a 59-

minute battle of left-handers.

The 24-year-old Croatian has been slowed by foot and elbow injuries this year and is still seeking his first tournament title of 1993.

"I'm playing much better than a month ago. I'm serving better especially when I need it," he said.

Ivanisevic led the ATP tour with 957 aces last year but is out of the leading ten now. "He has done a lot of work on and off the court," said his coach, bob Brett, an Australian who coached Boris Becker several years.

"His service has improved. It's a bright situation," Luis Mattar of Brazil and Lendl, Tauziat move into qtrs

SCHENECTADY, New York, Aug 27: Top seeds Ivan Lendl and Nathalie Tauziat advanced to the quarter-finals of the 350,000 OTB International Open tennis tournament with second-round victories on Thursday, reports Reuter.

Lendl beat Joren Renzenbrink of Germany 6-3, 6-3 while the Frenchwoman defeated Shi-Ting Wang of Taiwan 1-6, 6-4, 6-2.

In today's quarter-finals, Lendl will face Tomas Enqvist of Sweden, who beat Germany's Bernd Karbacher in a two hour, 58 minute battle in boiling heat and humidity.

Sixth seed Carlos Costa of Spain beat Dutchman Paul Haarhuis 6-2, 7-5 in another men's second-round match. Costa will next face Australian Richard Fromberg, who beat Danish qualifier Kenneth Carlsen 7-5, 6-3.

Whitlock, bowed out in the second round after defeat by Australia's Anthony Hill 15-6, 15-5, 8-15, 15-7.

Brett Martin of Australia also booked a quarter final berth defeating Finland's Sami Elopuro 15-12, 15-12, 8-15, 15-9.

Brett, elder brother of Rodney, will now meet countryman Hill in the quarter-finals.

Defending champion Martin, seeded second here, brushed aside England's Daniel Meddings 15-13, 15-4, 15-11.

Top seed Jansher Khan of Pakistan also scored a convincing win, defeating Adam Schreiber of Australia 15-9, 15-3, 15-10.

Jansher, who struggled in his first round win over Hong Kong-based compatriot Fahiem Khan, found his touch against an outclassed Schreiber.

The Pakistani ace who is aiming to win his sixth Hong Kong Open Title is playing competitively for the first time after a three-month self-imposed break.

"I was seeing the ball much better today and playing with more confidence," said Jansher, who comes up against Australian Rodney Eyles in the Quarter-finals.

Gul, meanwhile, continued his sparkling run by moving into the quarter-finals with a 15-10, 15-13, 17-14 victory over Egypt's Gamal el Amir. In the first round, Gul defeated compatriot Zarak Jahan Khan.

Kiwi Wilson will now come up against world number three Rodney Martin in the quarter finals.



Three of ardent Boris Becker fans try to stay cool under an umbrella while watching the German (far end of the court) practice on August 26 at the National Tennis Centre. Temperature reached nearly 100 degrees at the courtside players prepare for the US Open, which begins from Monday at the Flushing Meadow. — AFP photo