

Sport

Chang in no hurry at all



NEW YORK, Sept 4: It was four years ago that Michael Chang became the youngest men's Grand Slam champion in history with a stunning French Open win, four years in which a stream of American players have surpassed him in popularity and rankings, reports AFP.

Chang's French Open victory, which included upsets of Ivan Lendl and Swede Stefan Edberg, heralded the emergence of a new generation of American men tennis players.

But it is now Jim Courier who holds the world number one ranking and Pete Sampras the number two, with Chang at number seven.

While Andre Agassi is ranked behind Chang at number 16, he is probably the most recognizable name in men's tennis worldwide.

At 21, however, Chang believes he has plenty of time to develop his game.

He has no doubt that he can add more power and greater range to a style that has been characterised by sheer doggedness, a refusal to admit defeat no matter what the odds.

"I think it comes from more or less stubbornness in our family," said Chang, whose fourth-round French Open victory over Lendl in '89 came

when he was near collapse with cramps.

"I think it is more or less not wanting to lose, not wanting to give your opponent the satisfaction," he said. "I especially don't like to lose without knowing that I gave it my best."

That is the way I have been brought up and that is the way I have been called to play and that is the way I plan to play for the rest of my career," Chang said as he launched his 1993 US Open campaign.

He won his first match, against American Shelby Cannon, in straight sets, and beat Venezuelan Nicolas Pereira in four.

On Saturday he meets German Bernd Korbacher in the third round.

Despite an upset-laden opening week, Chang was confident he could progress this year.

He reached the semifinals here for the first time in 1992, a year that contained no Grand Slam titles but was nonetheless his most successful to date.

He earned three titles, reached as high as number four in the rankings and at the US Open fell to eventual champion Edberg.

"I have played the US Open for quite a few years and I was kind of stuck in the round of 16 for so many years," he said.

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that and to do better than that. It gives me confidence coming in to play this event, not having to worry so much about a particular round."

This year Chang has wins in Osaka, Japan, and Cincinnati, Ohio, to his credit.

Along with his emotional perseverance comes a prodigious capacity for work that prompted veteran Jimmy Connors to point to Chang as his spiritual successor in men's tennis.

The comparison seemed odd, the boisterous Connors to the soft spoken Chang, and, Chang said he was not so sure it was apt.

He says the urge to chase down every shot, no matter how unlikely, is for him impossible to resist.

He hopes to make the instinct even more dangerous by adding more power and variety to his shots.

"I think my game is starting to get better and better, starting to mature more and more," he said.

He pointed out that Courier (23), Agassi (23) and Sampras (22) all have a slight edge on him in years.

"I am a little bit younger, so I give myself a little bit more time to mature and to let by game mature," he said.

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Morceli's two-night wonder



BRUSSELS, Sept 4: Nouredine Morceli, O'Sullivan and Mutola now join the race for the 100,000 dollar prize-given to the overall Grand Prix winner after next Friday's London final. In addition, they can win 30,000 dollars for finishing first in their individual category.

"The gold is definitely a motivation," Morceli reflected after winning the mile here on Friday in the fifth fastest time ever recorded.

"Money is very important to athletes. It gives us motivation. Athletes have to make a living."

The 23-year-old Algerian has already proven himself on of the finest 1,500 metres/miles runners in history.

Now he plans to extend his range and attempt every world record from 800 metres to the 5,000.

"Next year, I will try and break the world records from 800 metres to 5,000 metres," Morceli said.

"You don't always stay young and there are no major championships."

Another North African, Morocco's Khalid Skah, has similar ambitions.

Olympic champion Skah comprehensively defeated the best Kenyans over 10,000 metres in Brussels and said he had been happy with his season despite failing to win a medal at the World Championships.

"Next year, I will try and break the world indoor 3,000 metres record and then the 5,000 and 10,000 outdoors," Skah said.

"In two years, we will have the World Championships again — time goes fast."

In ordering the match to be replayed, the federation concurred with Varzim's challenge of the referee's decision.

Trofense claims a replay would be unfair because the team has lost eleven players from last year's squad.

The aggressive loyalty of the team's fans has captured the attention of this soccer-loving nation.

Worn out Argentina

BUENOS AIRES, Sept 4: Argentina face a decisive World Cup qualifier at home to Colombia on Sunday with trainer Alfonso Basile complaining that his team are worn out after nearly three months of non-stop international activity, reports Reuters.

The incidents started after thousands of Trofense supporters poured into the streets late Friday when some 150 National Guard troops broke up a meeting of team supporters who were voting whether or not to obey the federation order, said TSF.

Shouts and shoves quickly escalated into fighting between residents and guardsmen. Other fans lit bonfires on nearby train lines and blocked a major north-south highway that skirts the villages.

The National Guardsmen sprayed the crowd with high-powered water cannon and fired rubber bullets in attempts to clear the area, said TSF. At least three people were reported injured by the rubber bullets.

The crowd dispersed when town officials ordered guardsmen to withdraw from the city center.

No arrests were reported.

The federation ordered the replay because the original Varzim-Trofense match had been moved to a secondary pitch by a referee who said the Varzim club pitch was unplayable.

The National Guardsmen sprayed the crowd with high-powered water cannon and fired rubber bullets in attempts to clear the area, said TSF. At least three people were reported injured by the rubber bullets.

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