

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 Pietrangeli in four.

On Saturday he meets German Bernd Karbacher 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.

"It was nice to kind of break

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.

"By all means, 21 — I'm in no rush."

Courier's no to TV commercials

NEW YORK, Sept 4: Jim Courier is excited to play in the US Open, but you won't see him appearing in any "I love New York" commercials any time soon, reports Reuter.

"It's just a matter of survival," said Courier, referring not to the competition but the conditions at the National Tennis Centre complex.

"Surviving is part of this tournament. The easiest part of this tournament for me is when I step out on court," Courier said following his extremely easy 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 second-round win over American qualifier Michael Joyce on Friday.

The 22-year-old Floridian has lasted the full two weeks at each of the other three Grand Slams this year and suggested life for the players in easier in Paris, Melbourne and London.

"It is not really comfortable off court here for the players," complained the world's top-ranked player.

The locker rooms are bad, the lounge is very crowded, you know there is really nowhere for us to hide," added the Australian Open champion.

He was especially critical of the outside courts, on which the lesser lights of the tennis world are forced to play their matches.

"The other courts are totally different than the centre and grandstand," he said. "They have pot holes, I mean it's pathetic."

"Luckily I played most of my matches on the show courts so I don't have to deal with those conditions except in practice."

He did favour the decision to abandon the electronic line calling system after its spotty performance in testing during qualifying.

"I think the general consensus among the guys is that we prefer to get angry at linespeople instead of computers," said Courier.

His displeasure and discomfort aside however, Courier is ready to add his first US Open title to two French Open and two Australian Open crowns.

"It's always kind of crazy, but it is what it is. It is the US Open, so I am still excited to be here and I am pumped up to play," he said.

"Once I am on court it is our country's championship."

Nigeria knock Ghana off the throne

TOKYO, Sept 4: Captain Wilson Oruma scored in the early first half and Peter Anosike added in the late second half as Nigeria beat defending champions Ghana 2-1 in an all-African final of the FIFA Under-17 Soccer World Championship Saturday, reports AP.

Oruma headed into the centre of the goal from the goal area three minutes into the first half and Anosike dribbled past the Ghanaian defence to score Nigeria's second goal in the 34th minute of the second half before 15,000 spectators at National Stadium.

For Oruma, it was his sixth goal of the championship, five of them heading shots and Anosike had five goals since its began Aug 21.

Ghana's only goal came in the last minute of the match, scoring with a heading shot by the 14-year-old Joseph Fameye, his fourth goal.

Nigeria captured the championship and Ghana finished in second place.

In a match to decide third place, Chile beat Poland 4-2 in a penalty shootout after a 1-1 tie in the 80-minute regulation time.

Poland's first point was made as a Polish player hit the ball into his team's net in 26th minute of the first half.

Chile made it 1-1 when Sebastian Rozental struck a penalty kick into the goal with three minutes left in the second half.

Poland outshot Chile 11-7. Head coach Leonardo Veliz of Chile said, "It was our first international match and are quite satisfied with third place finish."

Chile finished third place and Poland fourth in the championship competed by Ghana, Japan, Mexico, Italy, Nigeria, Australia, Argentina, Canada, the Czech-Slovakia Republics, the United States, Colombia, Qatar, Poland, Chile, Tunisia and China.

China's surprise charge

SANTIAGO, Sept 4: China, with no track record to speak of, staged a surprise charge on Wednesday to the top of its group after six of the opening rounds in the World Bridge Championships, reports Reuter.

But USA-1 one of the pre-championship favourites, slipped to seventh place with only the first four per group to qualify for the quarter-finals after the initial 14 round double robin.



World champion Garri Kasparov of Russia shakes hands with his British challenger Nigel Short at Simpsons in the Strand for the drawing of lots on September 3 in London.

— AFP photo

Super quintet's golden soak



BRUSSELS, Sept 4: Five of the world's elite track and field athletes will share 260,000 dollars after winning their events at the Brussels Grand Prix on Friday, reports Reuter.

A jackpot of 20 one-kg gold bars, worth an estimated 260,000 dollars, will be divided between Ireland's Sonia O'Sullivan, Algerian Noureddine Morceli, American Michael Johnson, Mozambique's Maria Mutola and Norwegian Trine Hattestad.

They won consecutive victories at the "Golden Four" meetings in Oslo, Zurich, Berlin and Brussels and will leave here richer to the extent of 52,000 dollars each.

They were presented with chocolate replicas of the bars in a brief ceremony just before the end of the meeting, the last on the Grand Prix circuit before next Friday's London final.

With Jamaica's world 200 metres champion Merlene Ottey dropping out of the meeting, the five were the only athletes left who could win a share of the golden jackpot and each athlete duly competed untroubled victories.

O'Sullivan, the world, 1,500 metres silver medalist, set the pace by beating European champion Yvonne Murray in the women's 3,000 metres.

Cool autumnal conditions, typical of this meeting which is always staged near the end of the season, ruled out a world record as O'Sullivan herself realised midway through the race.

"I knew halfway through I was not going to run a world record," O'Sullivan said. "I was relaxed on the last lap. I knew Yvonne would try to pass me."

Morceli also failed with his second attempt on Steve Cram's world mile record in eight days

but his time of three minutes 47.30 seconds was still the fifth time ever recorded.

"It was a bit cold," Morceli said. "But the gold was a definite motivation."

Johnson powered away with the men's 400 metres in 44.45 seconds. Hattestad won the women's javelin with 67.92 metres and Mutola emerged from the pack to win the women's 800 in 1:57.90 after a scaring run down the final straight.

Despite the chilly conditions,

there was plenty to savour on the track.

Morocco's Olympic champion Khalid Skah triumphed over his Kenyan rivals in the men's 10,000 metres after an exemplary display of cooperation between the front runners.

Skah revealed he had met the leading Kenyans, including Olympic silver medalist Richard Chelimo, on Thursday and agreed they should all share the pace.

Chelimo was briefly Olympic champion in Barcelona after Skah was disqualified for allegedly receiving assistance from a lapped teammate. The decision was later reversed, a decision the Kenyans have never accepted.

"I wanted a fast race," Skah said. "Therefore I met yesterday with Chelimo and the other Kenyans. We agreed to work together. Now I'm a friend of the Kenyans — not on the track of course."

American champion Sandra Farmer-Patrick, who pushed Sally Gunnell to a world record at last month's Stuttgart World Championships, handed the Briton her first defeat of the season in the women's 400 metres hurdles.

"It doesn't make up for Stuttgart," Farmer-Patrick said. "Definitely not."

British high hurdler Colin Jackson, became the first man to run under 13 seconds three times in a season when he clocked 12.99 seconds.

Jackson, who sliced the world record to 12.91 seconds in Stuttgart, said he thought he could run in the 12.80 second next year.

Olympic and world champion Linford Christie reversed last Friday's defeat to Leroy Burrell in Berlin with a commanding win in the men's 100 metres in 10.06 seconds.

"I'm getting better as I get older," Christie said.

Accolade for Sotomayor

OVIEDO, Spain, Sept 4: Cuban high jumper Javier Sotomayor was awarded the Prince of Asturias prize on Friday — the most prestigious award bestowed by Spain, reports Reuter.

Sotomayor, the World and Olympic high jumper champion, who broke his own world record at Salamanca, Spain, on July 27 with a leap of 2.45 metres, gets a cheque for five million pesetas (37,000 dollars).

Presented in the northern region of Asturias, the prizes are offered for excellence in various fields. Other sporting winners have been British athletes Sebastian Coe, Ukrainian pole-vaulter, Sergei Bubka and Spanish cyclist Miguel Indurain.

Henkel expecting

BONN, Sept 4: Olympic high jump champion Helke Henkel is expecting a child this year but hopes to be back in competition in time for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, her husband and manager Rainer Henkel announced Friday, reports AFP.

"She is 14 weeks pregnant, but is not the end of her career, she will resume training next summer," he said.

War of chess-lords begins Tuesday

LONDON, Sept 4: World chess champion Garri Kasparov will have the first move — and therefore a slight edge — in the first game of his 24-match title fight with Britain's Nigel Short starting on Tuesday, reports Reuter.

Kasparov on Friday drew the white pieces, which move first and are regarded as having a slight advantage over black, much like the serve in top-level tennis. The players then alternate colours for the rest of the contest in London.

Azeri-born Kasparov, who now represents Russia, and Short won the right to play each other for the world title before falling out with the chess governing body FIDE in a dispute over the location and prize-money for the final.

They joined forces earlier this year to stage the clash themselves through a newly-formed Professional Chess Association. The match, at London's Savoy Theatre, is being sponsored by Britain's Times newspaper with a total of 1.7 million pounds (2.5 million dollars) at stake.

FIDE are staging a rival tournament starting in the Netherlands on Monday featuring the two semifinalists beaten by Kasparov and Short, Russian Anatoly Karpov and Dutch Grandmaster Jan Timman.

Park retains WBA title

SEOUL, Sept 4: South Korea's Park Yung-Kyun retained his World Boxing Association (WBA) featherweight title with a unanimous points decision over compatriot Chun Tae-Shik in his home-town of Damyang on Saturday.

The three judges scored the fight 117-112, 118-110 and 118-112.

Morceli's two-night wonder



BRUSSELS, Sept 4: Noureddine Morceli, who threatened to boycott last month's World Athletics Championships because no prize-money was paid, is on course to earn 182,000 dollars for two nights work, reports Reuter.

The Algerian world 1,500 metres champion was one of five athletes to share a jackpot of 20 one-kg gold bars at Friday's Brussels Grand Prix.

The total value of the bars, on offer to any athlete who won consecutive events in the elite "Golden Four" series, has been estimated at 260,000 dollars.

Accordingly, Morceli, Sonia O'Sullivan, Maria Mutola, Michael Johnson and Trine Hattestad each cleared 52,000 dollars for winning in Oslo,

Zurich, Berlin and Brussels. 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."

Rowdy fans go on rampage



TROFA, Portugal, Sept 4: Police fired water cannon, rubber bullets and tear gas into thousands of rioting soccer fans Saturday as they violently protested an order to replay a decisive Second Division game from last season, reports AP.

More than 30 people were hospitalized and dozens more treated in the melee, said Portuguese independent radio TSF.

The fans erupted in protest after the Portuguese Football Federation decided earlier this week to annual a Trofense club victory last season against arch-rivals Varzim and ordered the game replayed.

The victory allowed Trofense to hold on to a berth in the Second Division. If they lose the

Dynamo to stand against UEFA

TBILISI, Georgia, Sept 4: Dynamo Tbilisi will appeal against a UEFA decision to throw them out of the European Cup for allegedly trying to bribe the referee and linesmen before a preliminary round match last month, reports Reuter.

"We have hired six lawyers from different countries and sent an appeal to UEFA. God and the truth are on our side," Nukri Kaklashvili, a member of the Georgian Soccer Federation's directorate, told national television on Friday night.

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.

No arrests were reported.

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