

Edberg to disprove critics

PARIS, Sept 28: Swedish tennis player Stefan Edberg hit back on Monday at suggestions his career was on the slide, reports AFP.

The 27-year-old, heavily criticised after a string of poor performances, is determined to silence his doubters — and the best way to do that, according to Edberg, would be to add another Grand Slam title to his career successes.

"I don't think I'm finished. I've been in the world top ten for nine years and my target is to stay there for a tenth year in 1994," he said.

"Also, my goal is to win a Grand Slam title, the French Open at Roland Garros if possible."

Yet many believe the London-based Swede is not the force he once was, a view reinforced by brittle displays in the last three Grand Slam tournaments and capped by Sweden's capitulation against Germany in the Davis Cup last week.

Edberg fell to 19-year-old Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev in Paris in June in the quarter-finals. Worse still, he was completely out-thought tactically by the teenager, who relied on the lob to win 6-0, 6-7, 7-5, 6-4.

At Wimbledon, Edberg went one better, reaching the semi-

nals before coming across Jim Courier, the eventual losing finalist, whose power blew holes in the Swede's game plan.

His performance dipped badly at Flushing Meadow, where he was among a long list of seeds to make an early exit, losing 7-6 (7/3), 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 to unseeded Czech Karel Novacek.

And his showing in the Davis Cup semifinals in Sweden, when he was obliterated by Marc Goellner, and then beaten by Michael Stich in the 'dead' reverse singles, did little to dispel the impression of a man struggling with failing form.

Edberg, however, who became a father recently and has admitted that event has affected his on-court concentration, explained away his defeat against Goellner by arguing the German had been irrepressible.

"Certainly I could have played better, but Goellner was really strong, serving as he did — I have never played anybody before who served four aces in a tiebreak."

And he admitted he found it almost impossible to take an interest in the Stich match, with Germany already holding a 3-0 lead in the tie.

Edberg, trained by Englishman Tony Pickard, is sure he can add to his tally of six Grand Slam titles, despite a 1993 which saw him miss out on the majors for the first time in three

years and slip from second to fifth in the world rankings.

"If possible, I would like to win at Roland Garros. I'll prepare for it, like I did this season, with a few warm-up tournaments on clay. After all, I'm only 27."

Men's top 20

MONTÉ CARLO, Sept 28: Leading men's singles rankings issued by the Association of Tennis Professionals on Monday, reports Reuter.

1. Pete Sampras (US)
2. Jim Courier (US)
3. Boris Becker (Germany)
4. Sergi Bruguera (Spain)
5. Stefan Edberg (Sweden)
6. Michael Stich (Germany)
7. Andrei Medvedev (Ukraine)
8. Michael Chang (US)
9. Goran Ivanisevic (Croatia)
10. Richard Krajicek (Netherlands)
11. Petr Korda (Czech Republic)
12. Thomas Muster (Austria)
13. Cedric Pioline (France)
14. Alexander Volkov (Russia)
15. Ivan Lendl (US)
16. Wally Masur (Australia)
17. Karel Novacek (Czech Republic)
18. Todd Martin (US)
19. Magnus Gustafsson (Sweden)
20. Marc Rosset (Switzerland)

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