

Happy birthday to Bradman

SYDNEY, Aug 27: Cricket legend Don Bradman celebrated his 88th birthday Tuesday but was too ill to attend ceremonies at the Bradman Museum in his home town of Bowral south of Sydney, reports AP.



In a message read to the crowd, Bradman said both he and his wife, Jessie, deeply regretted their absence.

"We have not been in good health in recent days," said Bradman, who was said to have experienced a mild stroke several months ago. His wife is reported to be suffering from cancer.

Prime Minister John Howard opened the second stage of the museum. The opening was also attended by three members of the 1948 Australian team captained by Bradman which successfully toured England. Arthur Morris, Neil Harvey and Sam Loxton — and Bradman's son, John.

"Of all the things I've been invited to do since, becoming prime minister, none gives me greater pleasure," said Howard. "Sir Donald is Australia's greatest living treasure, the best cricketer, and the most accomplished sportsman this nation has produced in 200 years."

Bradman compiled career figures which may never be matched, averaging 99.94 runs in Tests and 110.19 in domestic matches. He scored a century every 2.76 visits to the crease in test matches and ran up a total of 6,996 runs for Australia.

He first played for New South Wales state at 19, scoring a then world record of 452 not out against Queensland in 1929-30. He established himself in the Australian national team at age 20.

Bradman also toured England with the Australian team in 1930, scoring four centuries, five double centuries and one triple century. He scored 309 runs in a day during the test at Headingley, Leeds.

Passionate plea by Jewell's mom

ATLANTA, Georgia, Aug 27: The mother of a suspect in the Olympic Park bombing that left two dead and 112 injured issued an emotional plea to President Bill Clinton, begging him to clear her son's name, reports AP.

"Please hear me Mr President. You have the power to end this nightmare," Barbara Jewell said at a news conference here.

"If the FBI does not intend to charge my son, please tell me, please tell the world Mr President, please clear my son's name," she said barely able to finish her sentence as she broke down in tears.

Jewell's lawyers, who were at the news conference, helped her to the door as she sobbed uncontrollably.

Lawyers for former security guard Richard Jewell have mounted a public campaign to prove their client's innocence amid a media frenzy that followed a revelation the FBI considered him a suspect in the July 27 bombing at the Olympics.

Eriksson stays on course

555 Subaru world rally team driver, Kenneth Eriksson, overhauled fellow countryman, Thomas Raddstrom, on the second competitive section of Leg 2 of the fast and undulating 1000 Lakes Rally to finish the day in 5th position overall. And the Swede, who is currently lying in 3rd position in the 1996 FIA World Rally Championship, looks set to close the gap on Carlos Sainz in the chase for the Championship title, says a press release.

Today's stages have been typically fast but uncharacteristically dry and the speed set by the local Finns almost unmatchable, however Kenneth has benefited from running sixth on the road and has set top three fastest stage times, including as stage win, on a number of the sections. With Raddstrom behind him after the second stage, Kenneth set about reeling in young Finnish star, Jarmo Kytöaho, and closed the gap to within 9 seconds by Special Stage 17, despite hitting a rock and putting the tracking out of alignment on the Subaru Impreza 555.

As predicted, World series leader and local star, Tommi Makinen, steadily edged closer to four times world champion, Juha Kankkunen, finally taking the overnight lead on Stage 19 to finish 12 seconds ahead.

Hingis sails, Huber fails

NEW YORK, Aug 27: Gabriela Sabatini, the 1990 US Open champion, beat Patricia Hy-Boulais 6-1, 6-1 on Monday to advance to the second round of the year's final Grand Slam tennis tournament, reports agencies.

The 15th-seeded Argentine needed just 64 minutes to get past her Canadian opponent to set up a clash with either Anne Grossman of the United States or Italian Silvia Farina.

Martina Hingis led a youthful charge and Australian Open finalist Anke Huber and Magdalena Maleeva were fallen seeds in a hot, sunny opening to the Open.

The 15-year-old Hingis, seeded 16th, was honoured to play the first match of the tournament on Stadium Court but happy to hurry off with a straight-sets victory over the 112th-ranked Angeles Montolio of Spain.

"It was very hot and I didn't want to stay long on the court," said a cheery Hingis, who had no worries in racing to a 6-1, 6-0 victory against the over-matched Spaniard.

Hoping for a longer engagement on the cement at Flushing Meadows were the sixth-seeded Huber of Germany and 12th seed Maleeva of Bulgaria.

Huber, who lost to Monica Seles in the Australian Open final, a Wimbledon junior winner, had already proven her main stage mettle by reaching the quarters at this year's Australian Open.

"I hope I can get into the last 16," said Hingis, seeded to face third seed Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario in the fourth round.

Hingis has been working hard on conditioning and has lost eight pounds (3.5 kilos) in advance of the championships.

"There will be tough matches but I hope I can get there," she said. "Then we'll see if Arantxa will be there, too."

The fast-moving Olsza, 18, was cool in her opening match. "I wasn't scared when I heard that I was playing Maleeva," said Olsza. "I know that if I want to play professional tennis I have to do my best to try to beat her and I can't be scared."

Olsza is undaunted by the level of competition in the pros. "In terms of tennis, I think the junior players are really good now. In a few years, it could change a lot among the top players."

Two big-serving women's players made quick work of Japanese opponents. Brenda Schultz-McCarthy of the Netherlands, the 13th seed, was a 6-1, 6-4 winner over Japan's Nana Miyagi, while Czech veteran Helena Sukova prevailed over Yone Kamio 6-2, 6-3.

Austrian Barbara Paulus, seeded 14th, also reached the second round with a 6-2, 6-1 victory over Yi Jing-Qian of China.

Karpov defeats the world!

HELSINKI, Aug 27: Reigning FIDE world chess champion Anatoly Karpov of Russia beat an entire world of players Monday in the first-ever open Internet chess game, reports AFP.

The game, hosted by Telecom Finland, began at 1100 GMT and after 32 moves, the under-manned group of opponents, apparently numbering tens of thousands of enthusiasts around the world, resigned.

Karpov's moves could be seen over the Internet almost as they happened.

After Karpov's move his opponents had ten minutes to counter, and a Telecom server selected the most popular move.

Karpov retained his FIDE title in July when he beat the naturalised US Grand Master Gata Kamsky.

An expensive exercise

NEW YORK, Aug 27 (Reuters): A message on television monitors all around the National Tennis Centre reads: "Due to hot weather, please seek shade and drink plenty of fluids" — sound advice until you check out the price of fluids.

Perhaps the advisory was cut off before concluding: "...and bring plenty of money."

A small bottle of a garishly coloured sports drink at the sun-drenched US Open is going for 3.75 dollars, while a litre of basic, life-sustaining water will set you back 4.00.

"At the Olympics water was only a dollar, and that was the Olympics," said one incredulous fan, noting that the Atlanta Games had been notorious for price gouging.

US Open officials managed to insult most of the male tennis players last week with their controversial handling of the seeding and draw. When the tournament began on Monday it was the fans' turn to be offended.

"That baked lasagna better be good for 8.50 US dollar," said New Yorker Rebecca Weinstein, a US Open regular who was eating a sandwich she had brought from home.

A trio of hungry fans at the food court who had already forked over the lasagna money pronounced it good, but Carol Perry chimed in, "the water is ridiculous, they want four dollars for the water, you might as well get a glass of wine."

Indeed, a nice glass of Chardonnay or White Zinfandel was going for 4.75 dollar, while an imported beer was just a bit more than the water at 4.50 dollar.

What's the message here? "Maybe they want us to be alcoholics," Perry joked before lifting her glass of wine.

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"I think there are a lot of nerves, but even more so when you haven't done well in the other Grand Slams," said Agassi, who was knocked out in the first round of Wimbledon and the second round of the French after reaching the semifinals at the Australian. "You want to come out and establish yourself as a threat in the tournament."

He did that superbly. Hadad never had a chance, not against the Agassi who won the Olympic gold medal earlier this month.

Chang, on the other hand, knew what he was getting into against Onizins, whose best results have come on a clay court.

"I was pretty tight the whole match," conceded Chang, one of the hottest players on the ATP Tour this summer with a 16-2 record on hardcourts that included two titles and a runner-up finish.

"Everyone has moments when they get tight. Hopefully, this will have been my nerves for the whole tournament."

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Washington's win was not comfortable, either.

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Towards the end of his match my stomach felt like week-old sushi," said Washington. "Maybe it was a combination of the heat and something I ate."

Washington has not played well this summer since losing the Wimbledon final to Dutchman Richard Krajicek.

His best result was a quarter-final berth at the Olympics and last week he lost in the third round at the Canadian Open.

However, the American is confident about his prospects of having a good Open, which means at least sticking around for a projected fourth-round encounter with Agassi.

"Now, I know I can get to the finals of a Grand Slam. I think I expect bigger things," said Washington.

"Playing Andre, that would be a pretty nice meeting."

Other winners included a pair of former Grand Slam tournament champions whose victories set up a showdown in the second round.

Germany's Michael Stich, the 1991 Wimbledon champion,

Lee brings Leeds to light

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A relieved Wilkinson said: "It's been a difficult five months for us and I was pleased with the players' commitment tonight."

"I would be stupid and arrogant if I didn't realise that I was not irreplaceable, but when I reflect on how I am doing I am satisfied with my performance and I believe the board are as well," Wilkinson added.

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Their best chance came when Leeds United's left back Ian Harte, a Republic of Ireland international, headed just past his right hand post in the first-half.

Harte, one of five players in the Leeds side aged 21 or younger, had an outstanding match apart from that, and nearly capped it with a vicious curling freekick that was well saved by Sullivan in the 76th minute.



THE SPOILS OF VICTORY: A beaming Pakistan captain Wasim Akram poses with the trophy after his side beat England in the third and final Test at The Oval on Monday. The visitors won the three-match series 2-0.

The elite eleven

LONDON, Aug 27(Reuters): Wasim Akram's three-wicket haul for Pakistan in England's second innings at The Oval on Monday gave him his 300th Test match wicket.

Wasim becomes the 11th player to join the 300-club of bowlers and the second Pakistani, after Imran Khan, to achieve the feat.

Table with 4 columns: Player, Country, Wickets, Tests. Lists 11 players including Kapil Dev, Richard Hadlee, Ian Botham, Malcolm Marshall, Imran Khan, Dennis Lillee, Bob Willis, Lance Gibbs, Courtney Walsh, Fred Trueman, and Wasim Akram.

Other cricketers who have taken over 300 Test wickets: 1. Kapil Dev (India) 434, 131 Tests; 2. Richard Hadlee (New Zealand) 431, 86 Tests; 3. Ian Botham (England) 383, 102 Tests; 4. Malcolm Marshall (West Indies) 376, 81 Tests; 5. Imran Khan (Pakistan) 362, 88 Tests; 6. Dennis Lillee (Australia) 355, 70 Tests; 7. Bob Willis (England) 325, 90 Tests; 8. Lance Gibbs (West Indies) 309, 79 Tests; 9. Courtney Walsh (West Indies) 309, 82 Tests; 10. Fred Trueman (England) 307, 67 Tests; 11. Wasim Akram (Pakistan) 300, 70 Tests.

Essex rush to the top

LONDON, Aug 27: Essex took over at the top of the English county championship table on Monday thanks to a comfortable win at Gloucestershire and bad weather that ensured all their rivals fell short of victory, reports Reuters.

Neil Williams wasted little time in clinching Essex's innings and 64-run success. The 34-year-old paceman took five wickets to help dismiss Gloucestershire for 188 after they had resumed their second innings on 27 for four.

Kent were forced to settle for second spot despite a declaration and double forfeiture that left Glamorgan a target for 324.

After the loss of a day-and-a-half's play Leicestershire needed to take 13 wickets to force victory.

Starting the day at 81 for seven Hampshire were dismissed for 137 to follow on 216 behind. That left Leicestershire two sessions and 45 minutes to wrap up the second innings.

But they were interrupted four times by the rain and those lost 23 over finally denied them a return to the top as Hampshire held on to reach the close at 135 for nine.

Surrey also had to settle for a draw at Trent Bridge, where their run chase against Nottinghamshire was washed out by heavy rain.

After several interruptions, Surrey were set 319 for victory from a minimum of 59 overs when play eventually resumed in the early afternoon.

Darren Bicknell hammered an unbeaten 30 as Surrey rattled along at more than four over to underline their intentions.

But after 12.5 overs and having reached 53 without loss, the rain arrived leaving the umpires with little alternative but to abandon play.

Darren Gough responded to his England recall for the one-day series against Pakistan by producing his best county bowling figures for three years.

But his match return of eight for 33 was not quite enough to give Yorkshire victory as rain allowed Lancashire to hang on for a draw.

Only 13 overs were possible on the last day, during which Lancashire lost two more second innings wickets to stand at 231 for seven with a slim lead of 25 runs before play was abandoned.

Warwickshire's chance of retaining the title were all but dashed after Worcestershire held on for a draw at New Road.

Get to make 268 in 54 overs, Worcestershire lost 36 minutes because of rain and finished on 164 for four after a century opening stand by Tim Curtis (44) and Philip Weston (52).

Essex secretary-general manager Peter Edwards said: "He is a remarkable batsman and still the best in this country. No one will argue with that. You just have to look at his record to appreciate that fact."

Money makes a mess

NEW YORK, Aug 27: A big-money battle to organise a tour for the US Olympic champion gymnastics team has pulled apart the so-called "magnificent seven" who won gold in Atlanta, reports AFP.

Five members of the US team — Shannon Miller, Dominique Moceanu, Amanda Borden, Jaycie Phelps and Dominique Dawes — have signed with Bill Graham Productions for a 33-city tour set to begin September 19.

Each participant would receive 3,500 to 5,000 dollars per week under the deal.

But Chicago White Sox owner Eddie Einhorn, a long-time promoter, has gathered other baseball team owners to offer each gymnast one million dollars to participate on the "Magic Tour," a show that will include Russian gymnastics team.

Participants on the "Magic Tour" would receive 10,000 to 20,000 dollars a show. But for the US gymnast to each receive one million dollars, all seven must join the tour.

"Shame on these people for breaking up the Olympic spirit," said Steve Nunno, Miller's coach. "Every shark wants to get involved now that arenas are filling up to see them."

The two undecided are Amy Chiles and Kerri Strug, whose valuing heroes to seal the victory made her one of the Games' top heroes. Both are expected to decide this week, although Magic officials say they have a verbal promise from Strug.

Leigh Steinberg, Strug's agent, said she will participate in at least some of the Graham shows even if she goes for the better money deal.

"One of Kerri's goals is to have the whole team together," Steinberg said. Strug skipped a US television appearance with her teammates to appear on a rival show. But the original battle for television has moved into the financial realm. Dawes is trying to opt out of her deal with Graham.

"No one in the gymnastics community has any idea what kind of money is out there," said Kelli Hill, who coaches Dawes. "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realise these girls are worth a lot more money than anyone had any idea."

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